

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY, 1921

VOL. LXXII

NUMBER 1

The Samovar Girl*

A ROMANCE OF REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA

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ILLUSTRATED BY STOCKTON MULFORD

CLANK, clank, clank! It was the music of chains on a column of convicts as they swung down the road from the big prison and turned into the wide street between log houses. They were on their way out into the *taiga*, to cut wood under a guard of Cossack soldiers. The forms of the column were enveloped in the long gray capes of Russian exiles.

The sun was up, but it was only a patch of weak yellow light against the gray sky which roofed the Valley of Despair. Lowering wisps of fog still shrouded the hills about the settlement—fog that had lifted from the frozen and desolate reaches of the Ingoda, from the smoking huts of the tiny plain, from the snow-streaked slopes on which squatted the great rambling prison of hideous yellow logs.

The column of marchers moved out to the Czar's road, the chains hanging from their wrists to their ankles and crossed in front of them, making doleful music to the progress of the long line. Soon it was lost in the gray mists that masked the edge of the timber.

It was a bitter cold morning, and the streets of the settlement were almost deserted. The windows of the log buildings still glowed with the dim yellow light of candles against the frost-bound panes. The white smoke rose straight up into the air from the houses and huts, for there was no wind. The cold air carried sounds with startling clearness—the tolling of a bell at intervals, the barking of a dog, the clatter of axes driven into wood.

Shadows appeared at the windows fre-

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quently. For the Czar's mail was due from Irkutsk this morning, and the people were waiting to hear the bells of the sledges. The mail! It might bring life and death, joy and sorrow, sentence and pardon to Chita, in the Valley of Despair. The mail was the only link between the exile colony and the outside world.

None listened more eagerly for the first jingle of the mail-sledges that morning than Peter. He was only ten, and he worked with his father in a little hut on the Sofistkaya, making boots for Cossack officers.

Peter's blue eyes were set deeply, for he had never had enough to eat—not even enough black bread, or *ekrah*, the raw red eggs of the salmon. He was a tall boy for his age, but not very sturdy. His hair was clipped close to his scalp, and his little round head bent low while his hammer tapped at the wooden pegs in the boots by candle-light.

Peter's father was a political; but God had been good, and because Peter's father could make boots he had been admitted to the free gang, and so did not have to live in the big prison on the hill. The colonel-governor, Michael Alexandrovitch Kirsakoff, excellence and governor of the district, allowed Peter and his father to have the little hut to themselves—a place of one room, a window, a fire-pit, and shelves to sleep upon. And they had a battered old brass samovar to make their tea.

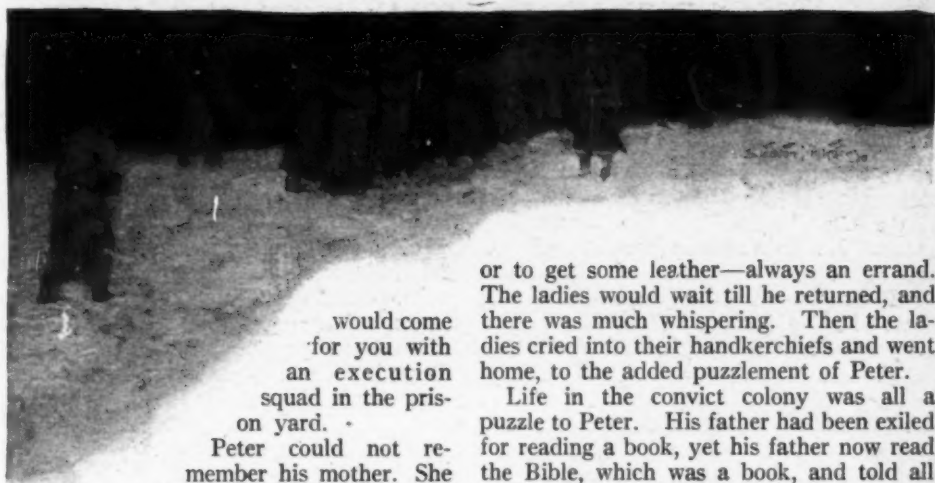
Gorekin, Peter's father, was not old, but his back was bent. He had spent years in chains before Peter was alive, and then

years stooped over a stitching-frame, sewing boots. "The old bootmaker,"

everybody called him, partly because his face was covered by a long and heavy beard, and partly because his eyes had such an old look in them—a look far into the future. He was always reading. It was reading which had made him a political and brought about his banishment to Siberia.

Peter was proud of his father, for he knew everything—even how many miles it was to Moscow, which was something to be imparted secretly. There are many things in an exile colony which are never spoken of aloud, and one must be careful with whispered talk.

Peter's round head was always being puzzled, and his blue eyes were always full of questions. He loved the Czar, just as every one else loved the Czar; but when there were no soldiers or secret police listening men would whisper and swear bitter oaths in secret. And it was not easy to tell who were secret police, for your friend to-day might prove to be one of the Third Division to-morrow, and then the doors of the big prison on the hill might open, and dawn



would come
for you with
an execution
squad in the pris-
on yard.

Peter could not re-
member his mother. She
had followed his father into
exile, and Peter had been born in the Street
of the Dames. His mother died that day.
Peter's father said it was just as well—
that life was really death in the Valley of
Despair.

Though Peter was only ten, he knew
something of the bitterness of life. Had he
not seen a man with a back all raw from
whipping, who had escaped from the pris-
on? He had crawled to the bootmaker's
hut, too weak to go on over the hills with
the others who had escaped, and lay all
night close to the fire-pit waiting for the
soldiers to come and get him.

But there were pleasant things in life for
Peter. There were the ladies who came to
the hut from the Street of the Dames. They
spoke the Czar's Russian, and were grand
ladies. They came to have boots mended,
and they whispered with Peter's father,
and winked and nodded about nothing at
all.

Sometimes they brought little cakes with
spices in them for Peter, or a handful of
dry tea, or a bit of sugar from China; and
sometimes they gave Peter as much as a
ruble. Their husbands were up in the big
prison, and the grand ladies had followed
to the Valley of Despair, and had built for
themselves, with their own hands, a street of
log houses.

And for some reason which Peter could
never fathom, after these ladies from the
Street of the Dames came to have their
shoes mended, Peter's father always re-
membered that he had to go up to the
prison with a pair of new boots for an offi-
cer, or to measure feet for a new pair,

or to get some leather—always an errand.
The ladies would wait till he returned, and
there was much whispering. Then the la-
dies cried into their handkerchiefs and went
home, to the added puzzlement of Peter.

Life in the convict colony was all a
puzzle to Peter. His father had been exiled
for reading a book, yet his father now read
the Bible, which was a book, and told all
about God and the Czar; but of course the
Bible was always kept hidden behind the
wood near the fire-pit.

And Peter's father read the almanacs
which came every year from Moscow, and
an almanac is nothing but a book. Every-
body had an almanac. It told about the
sun, moon, and stars, the holy days of
Holy Russia, the goodness and greatness of
the Czar, the names of the grand dukes,
and all the wonderful things they had done
for the people. It had pictures of saints
and miracles, pictures of watches which
might be purchased in Moscow by people
who were rich, pictures of skeletons of
dead men. An almanac was a wonderful
thing!

Peter had worn the old one out, reading
it by the fire at night with his father; and
the new one from Moscow was two months
late. That was why Peter watched so anx-
iously every morning for the mail-sledges
from Irkutsk, bringing the Czar's mail.

This morning he was pegging away fast
with his hammer, his father working near
by and whispering to himself—a way
Gorekin had when busy. The candle was
still guttering between them, and the fire
smoking comfortably.

Peter leaned from his bench every few
minutes to blow a hole in the frost on the
window-pane, and look up the Sofistkaya.
He saw the column of convicts going out to
the forest with the Cossack soldiers.

Peter rather feared the Cossacks. They
were "free men"—big, swaggering fellows
with blue breeches and yellow stripes on
their tunics and colored tops on their tall,
round caps of fuzzy wool. And though

Peter feared them, he was proud of them also, for they were a part of Holy Russia, and the power of the Czar flashed from the points of their lances when the Cossacks galloped over the plains.

Peter longed for the day when he would be big enough to become a soldier and wear on his cap the little oval button—"the eye of the Czar." Then he would know all things. His father always smiled sadly at such ideas.

"Peter Petrovitch Gorekin, soldier of the Czar!" he would say. "A soldier against the people, a soldier to bind our chains the tighter—oh, Peter Petrovitch! The day will come when your eyes will see!"

Which was a surprising thing for Peter's father to say, for Peter could see well enough with his eyes, except when the smoke got into them while he was reading the almanac and learning new words.

Peter's father was most anxious for Peter to learn to read as well as the priest—yes, even as well as Michael Alexandrovitch Kirsakoff, the governor. Peter could have made many copecks by working in the evening, helping to skin sheep for the butcher, but Peter's father insisted upon lessons with the almanac.

"The labor of a man's hands can be forced to do the will of a master," his father would say; "but the labor of a man's head is his own."

Peter could not understand that, because it was impossible to drive pegs with one's head. It was done with the hands and the hammer.

It was not long after the convicts disappeared into the *taiga* that Peter saw two black spots rise on the little hill beyond the river, and drop again out of sight.

"Ee-yah!" cried Peter. "They come!"

His father looked up from his stitching-frame, and then bent his head to listen.

"I hear nothing," he said.

"They have crossed the bend of the river," said Peter joyously. "The horses are coming fast!"

Both sat and listened, with only the snapping of the fire and the song of the samovar in their ears; but the sound of the bells on the horses did not reach them.

"Watch the road," said his father, and returned to his stitching.

Peter put his eye to the hole in the frost and watched the street up beyond the post-house; but he saw only an occasional Buriat, or a Cossack striding along, with

now and then a Tatar hunter returning from the hills with raw fur over his shoulders, and soldiers coming down from the prison above the town.

Then the bells! The first faint jingle came to Peter, and he saw the galloping horses of the first sledge come up into the road out of the river hollow, running free for the post-house.

"The post!" cried Peter. "It is here—and the new almanac! Give me the copecks, please! And may I run and see if the books have come for sure?"

Peter's father stopped work and filled his glass from the samovar, threw on a fresh chunk of wood for the fire, and dug some coins from his pocket.

"Go, little son, but dress carefully—it is too cold for a Tatar outside!"

Peter shoved his rag-bound feet into pink felt boots, whirled his long muffler about his neck, and got into his old gray coat. He took the copecks from his father, and in wild joy flew out through the door in the cloud of white steam made by the warm air that escaped with him into the frigid atmosphere outside.

Already the sledges had arrived in front of the post-house. The street was filled with people, and there was much excited gabbling. Peter could see the Cossack guards dismounting from their horses. The half-frozen drivers of the sledges were rolling stiffly out of their blankets, to clump through the icicle-fringed door of the post-house for their hot bowls of *bortch* and their drams of vodka.

Peter ran up to the crowd about the sledges, and breathlessly pushed in between the legs of the soldiers and men. Surely, this month, the almanacs must have come! Twice before he had been disappointed by the monthly mail, and he was shaking with eagerness. He wanted to cry out at once:

"Has the new almanac come?"

But there were no mail-sacks on the first sledge. Instead, it had three travelers—an old woman, an officer who was an aid of the colonel-governor, and a little girl—a pretty little girl, of about the same age as Peter. She had pulled back her beautiful white cap of ermine, and Peter could see the pink of her cheeks, her laughing blue eyes, and the scarlet silk lining of her coat of sable, where she had turned it back from her chin. She was standing up, looking over the heads of the crowd, and chattering to her old nurse delightedly.

Peter stared at her. He knew now who she was—Katerin Stephanovna Kirsakoff, daughter of the colonel-governor. He had seen her many times riding through the town with her Cossack outriders. She was kind to the poor people and the prisoners. On butter weeks she always threw copecks from her carriage to the crowds at the fair. It was said that she knew even the Czar himself.

Peter thought she was as beautiful as a holy icon. He almost forgot about his beloved almanacs as he stood and gazed at the beauty of Katerin. Her furs were so gorgeous, her skin was so clear, her eyes so bright! The cold did not hurt her, the guards protected her from the tigers in the hills, the officers bowed to her, the soldiers worshiped her.

"The governor comes!" came a warning cry from those outside the throng.

The soldiers at once began to drive the people back from the sledge, to clear the way for the droshky of Colonel Kirsakoff. Peter, who was inside the ring of people about the sledge, was pushed away. His heart sank, for he felt that he was to be cheated out of the news for which he had come to the post-house. He could restrain his eagerness no longer, and, fearing that he would be left in doubt about the almanacs if the soldiers hustled him up the street with the other people, he ran in toward the sledge.

Making an obeisance to excellence, he raised his arms and cried out to Katerin:

"Did your excellence bring the almanacs of the new year?"

But Katerin did not hear him. She was standing up and clapping her hands as she saw her father's droshky come whirling down the street to her.

The officer in the sledge got out of the robes about him, and stepped to the ground, urging the soldiers to drive the people away, so that the governor might not be delayed in meeting his daughter.

Peter turned to run away, but he slipped and fell. Before he could regain his feet, the officer hurrying out from the sledge stumbled over the boy and fell flat in the snow of the street.

"Fool!" cried the officer, glaring at Peter. "Get away with you! You dare address excellence, and now you are in the way!"

Peter stood up. The officer struck the boy in the face, and Peter fell again, almost

stunned by the blow. He saw the officer's boots stride away, and recognized them as boots which he and his father had made. He could see a forest of boots in all directions, and the sound of voices reached his ears in a confused medley.

Peter felt ashamed. The blood was flowing from his nose and making a mess on his face and muffler. The tears which came into his eyes from pain were freezing and sticking the lids together, making a film through which he could see but dimly. The crowd had drawn well away from the sledge now, leaving him lying there in the dirty snow. Such a sight to make of himself, he thought, in the view of Katerin! It would make her angry to know he had got in the way of the officer.

Peter heard his father calling.

"Little son, get up quickly and run! The governor comes! Do not let excellence see you there!"

But Peter could not move quickly, for his arms and legs seemed numb and helpless. His father ran out into the open space and picked him up.

Peter brushed the icy film from his eyes, just as Michael Alexandrovitch Kirsakoff got out of his carriage to hasten to his little daughter in the sledge. He was a tall man, ruddy of face, with white teeth showing in a smile under black mustaches. He had upon his head a high cap made of sable fur, with the badge of the Czar upon it. His long-skirted black coat was lined with fur, which stuck out in fringes at the edges, and he wore a great belt with double-headed eagles of silver at the buckle, a scarlet strap over breast and shoulder, and a saber at his side—a saber with a gold hilt bearing upon it the initials of the Czar.

Colonel Kirsakoff was holding out his arms to Katerin and calling to her. The officer who had struck Peter was beside the governor, with a watchful eye for the safety of his chief and the little girl.

"Get away, you and that boy!" the officer growled as the governor strode toward the sledge.

"He meant no harm, excellence," said Peter's father, pulling off his cap and making a deep bow as he tried to push Peter on before him.

"What's this?" demanded the governor, catching sight of Peter and his father, and seeing that the boy's face was bleeding. Colonel Kirsakoff's smile was gone at once, and he scowled angrily.

"This boy yelled at Katerin Stephanovna, excellence," explained the officer, "and then the clumsy fellow tripped me as I came from the sledge."

Peter's father swept his cap to the ground again in an abject bow.



TWO BLACK SPOTS
ROSE ON THE
LITTLE HILL. "EE-YAH!" CRIED
PETER. "THEY COME!"

"Pardon, excellence—I will take him away."

"What now?" exclaimed Governor Kirsakoff, with a searching look at the bootmaker. "You, Gorekin? Is this what I put you in the free gang for—to be under the feet of excellence?"

Peter's father bowed once more.

"True, excellence, I am Peter Paulovitch Gorekin, the bootmaker."

"Then you should be at your boots, and not under my feet!" snapped Kirsakoff. "Do I give you the liberty of the town to have you in the way with a bloody-nosed youngster when my daughter comes home?" The governor turned wrathfully to the commandant of the soldier guard about the sledges. "Take this Gorekin away to the prison!" he commanded.

"My son, excellence!" cried Peter's father, aghast at this disaster. "Oh, I beg, excellence! If I go back to the prison, my son will be—"

"You should have kept your son out of the way," said the governor. "You ruin the happiness of my daughter! Your son must learn his place—take them both to the prison!"

And Kirsakoff turned away and went toward the sledge, where his daughter was waiting for him.

"What has happened to the poor people?" asked Katerin, her face grave as she watched Peter and his father. She saw that the boy was crying, and had been hurt.

"Do not look at them, little daughter," said Michael. "They have disobeyed. Was it cold for you coming from Irkutsk? And did you bring me many kisses?"

The governor lifted her out of the sledge and smothered her with kisses.

At this moment a Cossack passed between the governor and the old bootmaker to drive the latter away, and two soldiers closed in beside him with the bayonets fixed upon their rifles. Gorekin held up his hand in a plea to speak again to the governor. He had dropped his cap. His face showed the agony of his despair. His mouth was open, and his lips trembled with the rage that possessed him.

"Excellence, I submit! But by the mercy of God, condemn not my son too!" he cried out.

One of the Cossacks pushed him back violently, so that he spun round and staggered blindly in an effort to keep his footing on the slippery snow. Then he turned with a cry and thrust the Cossack aside, to run after the governor, hands outstretched in supplication.

"Mercy for my son!" he screamed.

A Cossack's saber flashed, and Gorekin received its point in the back—once, twice—and with a scream fell writhing on the snow-packed ground.

Kirsakoff, the governor, ran with little Katerin in his arms toward the near-by droshky that was awaiting them. The crowd closed in at once about the stricken bootmaker.

Little Peter fell to his knees beside his father, who had been rudely rolled upon his back by the Cossack with the saber. The soldier searched hastily through the pockets of Gorekin's greatcoat, and Peter, screaming in terror, supposed that it was being done in aid of his father.

"It was this he held in his hand!" cried the Cossack, holding up a curved leather-knife which he had drawn from the pocket of the dying man's coat. "He would have killed the governor!"

Peter could not yet fully realize the disaster which had befallen him and his father. He knew only that the one human being who loved him, and whom he loved above everything in the world, was hurt and bleeding, for the snow beside the bootmaker was slowly reddening.

It seemed like an awful dream to Peter. About him was a black circle of boots, like the trees of a forest; he saw the print of nails in the hard snow; he noted a small round stone close by his father's head—the world appeared to be full of trifling things, yet suddenly filled with terror for him. He prayed that he might wake to find his father reading to him from the new almanac beside the fire in their little hut. Surely, he must be dreaming!

"Little father! Little father!" he cried in his agony.

The bootmaker coughed harshly.

"He tried to kill the governor," said a voice. "Here is his knife! I ran him through."

Peter recognized the voice as that of the Cossack with the saber.

"Little son!" gasped the bootmaker, his dimming eyes on Peter and his hand moving toward the boy.

"My father, whom I love!" Peter cried. "You must come for the man who can cure you! Quick, come with me to the watch-
fixer, who has the medicines!"

"I go—to meet—the dead. God's blessing on you!" whispered Gorekin.

"You shall not die!" screamed Peter.

He flung himself down upon his father and kissed him. Then he sat back upon his heels, moaning wildly, as he saw his father's face graying to the color of the trampled snow.

"I shall kill Kirsakoff!" he shouted. "I shall kill—"

"Pray!" said Gorekin. "Pray to God for—power and—"

Making an effort to cross himself with both hands, the exile died, staring up at the sky.

"He is dead," said a voice. "Take the boy to prison—it is the governor's order."

Sobbing and kicking, Peter was dragged away from the body of his father. The soldiers pulled him past the post-house. His eyes clung to the mail-bags being carried inside the building, and though he was crying, he wondered if the almanacs from Moscow had come.

Next he found himself in the sandy snow up the Sofistkaya, passing his own hut, and saw the white smoke rising from the crude stone chimney. He thought of the samovar singing inside, of the warmth and comfort that he would never know again, of his beloved father, who somehow, by some terrible fate, was gone forever from the bench by the stitching-frame.

He went on, pushed and pulled in turn by the two soldiers. The tears on his face and in his eyes blinded him with the particles of ice which formed from them in the bitter cold.

Over the little wooden bridge across the Ingoda they went, and up the slopes of the hill. He wondered where he was now; and, brushing his eyes clear, he looked ahead.

Before him were the yellow upright logs of the great prison stockade—the gate waiting to receive him into the Gethsemane of the Valley of Despair.

II

TWENTY short summers and long winters had come and gone in the Valley of Despair.



"TAKE THIS GOREKIN AWAY TO THE PRISON!"

This morning, Katerin Stephanovna Kirsakoff was awake before dawn. She remained in bed, listening in the dark for any sounds of conflict in the city. For months she had heard rifle-fire, and it was hard for her to realize now that there was no more looting and burning.

The windows of her room were hung with heavy blankets to conceal candle-light by night; for while the fighting between the various factions in Chita was over, the Cossacks were in control of the Valley of Despair—and Katerin, with her father, was hiding from the Cossacks.

Guided by the dim, shaded flame before the icon in a corner of the room, Katerin arose from the bed, and held her arms out to the image of the Virgin Mother.

"Save us, mother of God, again this day, from those who beset us, and bring us help!"

She whispered her prayers as she dressed in the dark. Then, going to the window, she pulled aside the blanket. The panes were coated with thick frost, and she scraped a tiny hole on the rough surface, so that she might look down into the courtyard, over the end of the street, and out over the plains which reached toward the Manchurian border.

The subdued light coming in from the window revealed her as a young woman of medium height, of slender and supple figure, clad in a trailing velvet house-dress of



"MY SON, EXCELLENCE! OH, I BEG, EXCELLENCE!
IF I GO BACK TO THE PRISON MY SON WILL BE—"

wine-red, with a sleeveless sable coat over the faded velvet.

She had the oval, high-bred face of the untitled nobility of Russia. The Kirsakoffs were one of the old boyar families who had always served their Czars as officers and administrators in the empire which spanned half the world; and Katerin had inherited all the best qualities of her race and class.

As the daughter of General Kirsakoff, once governor of convict colonies in Siberia, she had grown up quite like an imperial princess. She had been educated by tutors from Paris and Petrograd, she had learned to ride like a Cossack, and as her mother had died while Katerin was still a child, she had the poise of a woman who, though still young, had presided at her father's table in the governor's palace. All

her life she had been accustomed to a deference which was akin to that granted royalty; but now she and her father were hiding from the Cossacks whom Kirsakoff had once commanded.

So Katerin's blue eyes were hollow and melancholy, the result of months of terrorism and anxiety. The pallor of her cheeks was accentuated by her black hair, drawn tightly down over the ears in Russian style. Her long neck suggested a string of pearls; but though she had pearls, she did not wear them in these days, for they were buried in the courtyard of the old log house.

She moved with slow and languorous grace, and the carriage of her beautiful head was reminiscent of the portraits of members of the imperial family which had once hung on the walls of the home from which Katerin had fled, and was now but a charred ruin not far from the big prison—long since empty of its convicts.

She remained at the window, peering out with anxious eyes. A trio of Cossack soldiers were huddled about the glowing remnants of their night-fire. These were men in the army of Ataman Zorogoff, the half-Mongol, half-Cossack leader, who had set himself up as a ruling prince in the Valley of Despair. The ataman, in spite of his pretensions to chieftainship, was only a brigand with an army of adventurers at his back, bent upon enriching himself by levying upon people of wealth. He collected his tribute by means of firing-squads.

Katerin watched the gray light of a new day come over a frozen and desolate landscape. A thin mantle of snow covered the plains below the hills that walled in the valley on three sides. There were a few rude peasant huts out on the flats, with white smoke rising straight up from the stone chimneys. A long column of staggering telegraph-poles ran off beyond a spur of hill, marking the line of the railroad.

She saw a small band of Cossacks come galloping in toward the city, racing for warmth after a night on patrol. These belonged to the outer cordon—the chain of soldiers which Zorogoff kept about the city to see that no one entered—and that no one escaped. Some had escaped by train, but the ataman had his troops on watch at the railroad-station, and his spies, and the infrequent trains offered little chance for getting away.

The room in which Katerin stood looking

out of the window was filled with a queer mingling of rich things and crude peasant furniture. The floor was covered by a thick blue carpet, doubled in at the sides to make it fit, just as it had been thrown down hastily after being smuggled in by night from the old home by faithful servants, before the looters had begun burning.

The walls were covered with an ancient and faded paper. The ceiling had once shown colorful decorations, but the plaster was cracked, and leaks in the roof had turned the paint into grotesque figures.

The bed was hidden by a Chinese screen of carved leather, also saved from the old home. A great samovar of chased and filigreed silver stood upon an old wooden bench from the kitchen below. A table of rough boards, covered with a piece of purple silk, held an ornate candelabrum of marble and bronze; but the arms were sadly bent, so that the candles could not stand erect. Rugs of rich fur covered chairs made with a hammer and an ax. A monstrous black stove, built into the wall, reached to the ceiling.

Katerin pulled the blankets back from the window and fastened them, just as a gentle tapping came at one of the doors of her room. She stepped to the door, opened it, laughed cheerily, and kissed her father as he entered.

"The cold is like a wolf!" said Michael Kirsakoff, with a shiver. "Has not Wassili come up with fire?"

"Not yet," said Katerin. "I thought you would sleep longer, so I have not called him."

Michael was tall, but thin and weak with age. His face was gaunt, but the bones of his cheeks were partly concealed by a white beard, which was indifferently trimmed to a point at the chin. His gray eyes were dim, yet held still some of their old fire—stern eyes looking out from under gray brows and a forehead furrowed by trouble and by many years.

For a minute he stood looking at his daughter, searching her face for signs of anxiety; but Katerin's whole manner had changed with his entrance, and she gave no evidence of being worried. She went humming a tune as she looked over the table to see what she could do toward breakfast; then she moved to the door and called down to Wassili, the servant.

Michael was wearing the uniform of a general of the Czar. It had been Katerin's

idea that the former governor should put on one of his old uniforms. She knew that it gave him comfort and kept up his spirit, and she knew the Russian character well enough to understand that there was still some protection in the habiliments of rank and authority.

Michael Kirsakoff was only a shadow of his former self. His knees bent under him, his frame did not fill the tunic, his hands were white and withered, and shook, as did his head at times, with the palsy of age. Yet the old man was a striking figure in his gray tunic, with a white cross hanging from the collar, the wreath and sword of another order on his breast, and the heavy gold at his shoulders, with the stars of a general. His trousers were of dark blue cloth, with two narrow gold stripes. The belt about his waist had a silver buckle bearing a double-headed eagle, the emblem of the Romanoffs.

"Another day, little daughter!" he said, as he sat down on a bench and rubbed his beard thoughtfully.

"Another day of hope, my father—hope that some one will come to save us. Perhaps the Americans will come from Vladivostok, and then Zorogoff will have to change his ways."

Katerin stole a glance at the old man, wondering why he should be so downcast this morning.

"Nothing will happen," said Michael wearily.

"Something will surely happen," said Katerin. "Have we not got letters away to our friends? Have we not sent word by those who got away? All we must do is to have patience and wait. God is with the brave!"

"The young are brave," said Michael. "It is you who are brave, my daughter; but there are two things against us. We have too much money for safety."

"And what is the other?" asked Katerin, going to the door again to look below for Wassili.

"Your beauty," said Michael. "How many times in the old days have I thanked the holy saints for your beauty! I mourn now that you are so beautiful, for it may be your curse. But if they dare lay a hand upon you—"

Katerin laughed gaily.

"I will not be so beautiful, and you will not be so depressed as soon as the samovar sings and you have had your tea."

Wassili came in, a whiskered muzhik in clumsy boots, bearing fire on a shovel. Some of the burning coals he put into the stove; then he fired the samovar and went away for water.

"We could give up the money," Michael went on musingly; "but we would only be beggared—and then they would kill us, just as they killed the Rioumines. It is more dangerous to give up the money than to keep it hidden, for once Zorogoff has it he would put us out of the way, so that there would be no witness against him. By the holy saints, I will burn it first! I would as soon die a beggar as die with your fortune in the hands of this Mongol who calls himself an ataman!"

"Death is nothing," said Katerin. "Come, sit by the fire and do not worry. We are safe enough here till the American soldiers come."

"They will never come," said Michael, moving in front of the stove, and holding out his hands before the flickering light of the burning wood inside it. "We must escape. Perhaps Wassili can get away to Harbin on a train."

"That would do no good," said Katerin. "Our friends cannot come back here to us, you know; and if they did, they could not fight Zorogoff and his army. We must keep up hope for whatever the day holds for us, and—"

She stopped, as she heard a hammering at the gate of the courtyard.

"What's that?" demanded Michael, turning to Katerin in alarm.

"Master! Master!" shouted Wassili from below.

"What is it?" called Katerin down the stairs.

"The soldiers have come, master!" said Wassili.

"Bring the water for the samovar," said Katerin, "and then admit the soldiers. We cannot fight an army!"

"So they have come!" said Michael. "All the better! We shall know now, my daughter."

"We are in God's hands," said Katerin, with a glance at the icon in the corner. She crossed herself in resignation.

Wassili ran up the stairs, handed in the jug of water, and then hastened back. Soon they heard him opening the door of the courtyard, and the rasp of the ancient hinges was followed by the tramp of men in the hall below.

"We will not give them the money!" whispered Michael, rising from his chair and going to Katerin to put his hands upon her shoulders. "Let them kill me, if they will—my time is short at best; but you—
you would be helpless if they take all we have!"

She ran to the other room and returned with the saber, which she snapped into the straps of Michael's belt. Then she stood with a hand upon her father's shoulder, facing the open door, just as a Cossack officer mounted the top of the stairs and looked in cautiously.

The intruder wore a tall cap of shaggy wool thrust back on his head, leaving a lock of his black hair to hang athwart his forehead. His eyes were black and small, his large mouth heavily lipped. His cheeks were inclined to swartness, but the cold outside had given his skin a ruddy glow. He wore a long greatcoat, with cream-colored

"YOU EXPECT THE ATAMAN TO BELIEVE THAT IS ALL THE MONEY YOU HAVE?"

Taking his face between her hands, Katerin kissed him tenderly on the forehead.

"If you die, I shall not live," she said.

"I should like to reach the sky, but my arms are too short!" said Michael, expressing his helplessness by the old proverb.

"We have five thousand rubles in the Chinese box," suggested Katerin. "We might give them, and say that is all."

"Then do it, but do not be too ready with it," Michael agreed. "They will know we have more—"

"Hush! They are coming up the stairs!" whispered Katerin. "Quick, sit here by the table, and take your saber!"

sheepskin outside, and the wool of its lining visible at the edge in front. On his shoulders were the tin stars of a captain in Zorogoff's army, and from the skirt of his coat, on the left side, hung the toe of a saber-scabbard.

The captain stepped into the room. After a sharp glance at Katerin and Michael, he looked about suspiciously. Then he bowed politely, and clicked the spurred heels of his black boots.

"You are Michael Kirsakoff," said the



captain. "I have come from the Ataman Zorogoff. I am Captain Shimilin."

"I am General Kirsakoff."

"True," said Shimilin, with a shrug of his shoulders. "We know you were once a general—but the Czar is dead!"

"Oh, so you have heard of the Czar!" said Katerin.

Captain Shimilin took off his cap and looked calmly at Katerin, as if he were willing to disregard her irony. In fact, his look conveyed an appreciation of her beauty, and he allowed his eyes to linger on her.

Katerin met his eyes with steady gaze, without the slightest indication that the Cossack captain's scrutiny meant anything more than the deference and adulation due her person and position. She made a pretty picture, standing beside her father. The superb carriage of her head, her red sleeves of velvet, the gray of her sable coat, the swirl of the trailing skirt about her feet, gave her the aspect of a queenly consort at a royal audience.

Shimilin seemed to be waiting for something, and presently two men with rifles came in. Their faces were round, their noses short and flat, and they were dark enough to be full-blood Mongols. They were Buriats, descendants of the men who had followed Genghis Khan as his conquering hordes swept across Asia. They were poorly dressed in heavy black coats, their old boots reenforced with skins wrapped about the legs. They wore the high caps of the Cossacks, which made them appear taller than they really were.

The pair appraised the contents of the room, and then they stood staring at Katerin with their bead-like eyes—eyes full of menace, like the eyes of wolves who sight their quarry.

"Do you bring a message from the ataman?" asked Katerin, seeing that Shimilin was somewhat ill at ease.

She wished to hold the situation in her own hands, and so far she felt that she had something the better of Shimilin.

Shimilin threw off his greatcoat and sat down on a bench. He wore a gray tunic of wool with gold shoulder-straps, a brace of pistols in his belt, a gorgeous saber with a silver hilt, and riding-breeches of blue with yellow stripes down the sides of the legs.

"The ataman calls upon Michael Kirsakoff for a loan of a million rubles, to help support his army, and to give you and the

people of the city protection from the looters," said Shimilin.

"It is easy to count the money in another man's pockets!" snapped Michael. "We have little left now, and there is a saying that beggars are always safe."

"Beggars!" cried Shimilin. "Please, I like a joke, but everybody knows you are rich. You have millions of rubles."

"Yes, I know—millions of rubles! It takes little breath to say it; but we had been robbed long before the Ataman Zorogoff came to rule—and to protect us."

"Others have said the same thing. An army cannot live on air. The ataman needs money. Partridges are killed with silver bullets—and so are robbers!"

"You know we have been robbed," Katerin replied quietly. "We have a little money, true; but if you take that we shall die of hunger. What does it matter who takes it—Zorogoff, or the bandits you talk of to us?"

"What is your answer to the ataman?" demanded Shimilin.

"If he demands our money, we can only give what we have."

"I will take it," said Shimilin curtly.

Katerin went behind the screen which shielded her bed, and returned with a lacquered Chinese casket. She opened it, and took out several packets of the old imperial rubles.

"This is all we have," she said, putting the packets into Shimilin's hands.

Shimilin smiled up at her.

"How much?"

"Probably ten thousand rubles."

"You expect the ataman to believe that?"

Katerin shrugged her shoulders.

"I cannot think for the ataman," she said.

Captain Shimilin rose abruptly, stuffed the rubles into his pockets, pulled on his greatcoat, and bowed with a click of his heels; but his formality and politeness had no sincerity, for his lips held a sneering smile.

"We shall meet again!" he said.

Turning to make a gesture to his soldiers, he preceded them out of the door, and the trio clumped down the stairs.

Michael sat staring at the floor, a picture of dejection. Katerin went to him, and bent down to kiss him.

"Only the Americans can save us," said Katerin.

"They will come too late to save us," said Michael.

III

AN American army transport came lurching out of the Japanese Sea, and, following the lead of a gray and gaunt destroyer that came out to meet her, turned into the Gulf of Peter the Great.

The islands and cliffs of the shore-line of Siberia looked bleak and wind-whipped, desolate and snow-slashed, for the first blasts of winter's onsets had swept the land. The transport, her gray sides covered with sea-grime of the Pacific, slowed her pace and approached the overhanging hills of Vladivostok with caution.

Among the officers crowding the upper deck was a young man wearing single silver bars on the shoulders of his khaki tunic, and on the collar a bronze eagle enclosed by a circle of the same metal. To those who understood such things he was proclaimed as a first lieutenant serving with the Intelligence Division of the United States Army.

Peter Gordon was a sturdy chap of good height, cleanly shaven, his face inclined to ruddiness. His chin was generously molded, his jaw had a squat squareness to it which gave the lower half of his face a suggestion of grimness, but his blue eyes had a good-natured twinkle in them, along with a trace of seriousness.

He had kept to himself a good deal on the passage from San Francisco. When others had been romping on deck, he had kept to his cabin—studying Russian, he said.

When the transport drew near to the coast of Siberia, he had stood nearly all day alone in a sheltered nook at the head of the upper deck, where the shrouds came down to the rail and prevented more than one person getting into the corner. He seemed always to gravitate to spots in the ship which would insure his being alone. Then he stood gazing out over the sea ahead, busy with his thoughts.

Yet, for all his aloofness, Lieutenant Gordon was pleasant enough in his quiet way. He listened attentively, at mess, to a captain who told his table-mates some interesting points about the history of Russia. The captain knew his subject well, for he had a cabin full of books, and had been reading up on Russia all the way across the Pacific.

Another passenger on the transport was a major who had been in Russia as a military attaché. He spoke the language well, and gave lessons to the other officers. Gordon attended some of the lessons, though his progress with the language seemed to be slow.

One day the major had asked the class to repeat a sentence in Russian which he had given. Gordon was the only one to repeat the words with anything approaching correctness.

"Splendid!" said the major. "Your accent is fine! You are making progress, and—" The major stopped suddenly, and looked intently at Peter. "You might easily be taken for a Russian yourself, Mr. Gordon."

The class had laughed at that, and Peter Gordon had reddened slightly. When he was asked to repeat another sentence in Russian, he had rather bungled it. He did not appear again at the major's classes, and he had kept more to himself after that.

So no one thought anything of the fact that Peter preferred to stand by himself at the head of the upper deck to watch the islands sail past as the transport nosed into Vladivostok Bay. He watched a boat come out flying the white and blue flag of the Czar—the old cross of St. Andrew. He scanned the shattered hulks of the warships of the second Nicholas, lying on the beach like the bones of dead sea-birds. And he saw the cruisers of England, France, Japan, and the United States, spick and span and most efficient-looking, at anchor off the city.

Many strange flags flew from the tops of buildings on the hills over the bay. The green spires of churches glistened in the afternoon sun. The gashes which were streets began to reveal the things crawling up and down them as carriages and motor-cars and hurrying throngs of people.

On the hills above the city was a queer fringe of flat white heaps, some of them sheeted with canvas. These were vast stores of things gathered to the port from all the world for the war against Germany, and now lying idle and wasting because the throne of the Romanoffs had toppled and the body of the murdered Czar had been thrown into a well.

The transport moved up to her dock at the end of the bay, past the city. Peter still stood in his nook, watching Vladivostok pass before him, and listening to

the interested comments of the other officers who crowded the upper deck.

Russians in belted blouses and great boots stood and stared up at the ship, while they ate sunflower-seeds and gossiped. Cossacks in high woolly caps swaggered about with sabers at their sides. German prisoners of war labored with heavy cases, still clad in the dirty finery of gaudy uniforms. Shaggy horses drew rude wagons, and peasant girls in men's boots, with shawls over their heads, did the work of strong men.

Peter watched the scene on the dock with interested eyes. It seemed that his face became grimmer, and an angry light grew in his eyes. When the lines were fast to the pier, he turned abruptly from where he was standing and went aft to his cabin.

He loaded his automatic pistol with great care. Then he filled extra magazines with big blunt-nosed bullets, and distributed the magazines through the pockets of his tunic.

He looked at himself in the glass on the bulkhead. He saw that his eyes were half-closed, and that the blue of them had a certain steely sheen. He smiled at himself—a tight-lipped smile, a smile of satisfaction, a smile such as a man might have who had at last reached the peak of an ambition which had been long nursed.

"I shall take my time!" he mused. "Speed is good for nothing but catching fleas!"

After a while an orderly came and told him there was an automobile on the dock for officers who had to report direct to headquarters in Vladivostok. Peter followed the messenger, and, stepping from the end of the gangplank to the soil of Siberia, saluted the land.

He climbed into the automobile with

other officers, but he kept silent, while they were gay and chattering. The car bumped away with them. The water-front streets were muddy and unpaved. Squalid buildings with crude signs in Russian announced that within might be found tea and food and liquors.

Pigs were loose in the streets, scratch-



THE RUSSIAN STARED; FOR LIEUTENANT PETER GORDON, OF THE AMERICAN ARMY, WAS SPEAKING PERFECT RUSSIAN

ing themselves amiably on house-corners. Old Russian songs were being bawled lustily by roisterers inside the drinking-places. Russians wandered about aimlessly staring at everything strange—the American army mules, the motor-cycles whizzing about among the pigs, and the honking car with the American officers.

In the town, everybody seemed to be on holiday but the Chinese. They trotted about with burdens on their backs, apparently unaware that freedom had come to Russia and no one need work.

The car rolled into the Svetlanskaya, the main street of Vladivostok, and began to climb one of the many hills. Strange men in uniform were everywhere—black Annamites in French blue, yellow Japanese in buff, Czechs in brown, Americans in snuff-colored khaki, gray Cossacks, bronzed Canadians—and over them all the musty odor of Asia.

Military cars were shooting about in all directions. Dilapidated trolleys packed with humanity creaked over bad rails. Droshkies heeled about among the burden-bearing coolies through a great stream of confused traffic.

The city was a place of swarming tangles of people—beggars and princes, vagabonds and viceroys, conquerors and conquered, all whirling about like mad ants in a panic. Refugees from the interior, carrying their few possessions in blankets, mingled with generals of the old régime, who were still trying to look important. Poor women in rags, with frightened eyes red from crying, stared at foreign-looking ladies lolling in carriages and clad in suspicious grandeur.

The air was seething with joy. There were flags everywhere, there was much gabbling and running about, and the restaurants were full of people. Peter observed it all, and peered into the crowds, when the car slowed down in a press of traffic, as if he expected to find among all these teeming thousands a face that he knew.

At headquarters he found the chief of intelligence in a large room filled with map-makers, Russian translators, officers, and orderlies. The place resounded with a great buzz of conversation and a mighty clacking of typewriters.

Peter took his time before he reported at the desk in the corner, where his chief, a grave-faced colonel with spectacles, sat beside a great wall map of the Russian Empire, spotted with colored tacks and tiny tags. For Peter appeared to be pondering something, yet at the same time he was keenly interested in all that was going on. He got over by a table with the Russian translators, where he could hear them talking in their own tongue, as if he wished to test his own ability at understanding the language.

After a while he presented himself at the colonel's desk, saluted, and gave his name. The colonel looked him over casually, and said:

"Report to me in the morning, lieutenant. You will be quartered here at headquarters, on the floor above."

So Peter looked after his baggage, and then spent the afternoon alone in the cafés along the Svetlanskaya, mingling with the various factions gathered in the city—monarchists, anarchists, nihilists, German agents, and the adherents of new parties intriguing for power. He suspected that there were many spies. Everybody seemed wary of everybody else. It was a great orgy of talking and whispering, and Peter could make neither head nor tail of it all; but he studied the people closely, wherever he went, taking care that no man's face got past without a scrutiny.

At mess that night he overheard a conversation in which mention was made of the idea of sending an intelligence officer to Irkutsk, to take station there as an observer. Peter's eyes began to close slowly, till there was but a narrow slit between the lids—which was a manner of his when he fell into deep thought.

He found the chief of intelligence at his desk that evening.

"Sir," said Peter, "I understand that an officer may be sent up toward Lake Baikal—to Irkutsk, perhaps—as an observer."

"Yes, I am thinking of it," said the colonel. "That is the country controlled by Zorogoff, the ataman of the Cossacks in the Transbaikalian region."

"I hope, sir, that I am not too confident of my own abilities, but I would like to apply for that detail. I would like to—see the country."

"What duty have you been assigned to here, lieutenant?"

"I have not been assigned yet, sir."

The colonel considered a moment.

"You ought to have a little more time to get acquainted with the situation before you go out into the interior," said the colonel.

"Perhaps that's true, sir; but even if I come back here, I'll be better able to understand the situation out in the country."

"I'll think it over," said the colonel, and turned to his ringing telephone.

The colonel evidently did think it over, for within an hour Peter received orders to leave at once for Irkutsk, on board a train carrying Czech soldiers and supplies toward

Omsk and the region spoken of so vaguely as "the front." A soldier who was a native of Russia was detailed to accompany Peter as orderly and interpreter.

Peter went at once to the station to find the train, leaving the soldier to bring on the grip and bedding-roll, which was all the baggage he would take.

He found the station filled to overflowing with refugees from the interior—sick and well, women and children, lame and blind, hungry and unclean. They lay on the floors, cooking and eating everywhere, begging and filching food wherever they could. They were like the dirty froth thrown up on a beach after a tidal wave, a pitiful human wreckage fighting for existence after having survived a typhoon of destruction which had shattered a great nation.

The sight of it, the smell of it, the misery of it, almost made Peter ill. It made him long to find some one who could be blamed for it. It inflamed wrath within his soul.

He stumbled down the railroad yards, seeking the train among a labyrinth of box cars. Though he was already in his furs and his canvas coat lined with sheepskin, ready for the wolf of winter already howling across the landscape, the wind from the bay chilled him.

Candles gleaming in the windows of an old fourth-class car drew him. He found soldiers inside—Czechs cooking their supper over crude heating-stoves, amid a cloud of smoke from the yellow Manchurian coal. The place was nothing but a pen on wheels, so jammed with men that there seemed to be no more room inside. The sleeping-shelves were full of soldiers, the floor was littered with coal and wood and all kinds of boxes and bundles; but it was the right train.

The orderly came presently, laden with the lieutenant's baggage, and he explained to the Czechs that Peter was to travel in that car by order of the Czech commandant. The soldiers smiled and found two empty shelves. And soon the train began to grind slowly out of Vladivostok, to carry Peter some three thousand versts away.

The next morning, at Nikolsk-Ussurisk, Peter found an American captain whose orderly had gone to Vladivostok sick, leaving the officer without an interpreter. He was helpless till he could get another man.

"Take my man," said Peter with sudden inspiration. "I shall not need an interpreter on the train. When I get to Irkutsk I will let you know, and you will have a new man sent to you by that time—a week or two from now."

"Well, that's an idea!" replied the captain. "Perhaps I can send your man along to you in a couple of days, and he'll catch this train farther up the line."

"No, sir," Peter told him. "Hold my man till you hear from me. I'll wire you from Irkutsk. There is a Czech in my car who speaks fairly good English, and I'll get on all right."

"That's mighty decent of you," said the captain.

So Peter's orderly remained in Nikolsk, while the train rumbled on, out of Russian territory into Manchuria, heading for the far border of the Siberian wilderness ahead.

The route followed old caravan trails over the plains, and up through the mountains, in which yellow bonzes hid themselves from the world on sky-kissing peaks in secret monasteries. Then, winding down through the great passes, the train traversed the millet plains where the conquering Tatars raised their hordes, and on through forests in which only wolves ruled.

The land was held in the grip of desperate cold. The wheels whined as they ground along the frosty rails. Bridges lay in ruins across rivers, replaced by shaky structures of logs that swayed and groaned with the weight of the train.

Peter found every station filled with refugees fighting to get aboard anything that moved. Some were trying to make their way to Vladivostok; others from Vladivostok were pleading to get back to inland cities. Long strings of box cars in the sidings were packed with men, women, and children, ragged and filthy, hungry and dying, only keeping alive by threshing by hand grain which was rotting in the fields, or fishing in the rivers with wooden spears. And there were trains coming back from the front filled with human derelicts—cattle-cars festooned with crimson icicles!

Yet the people seemed patient in their misery, waiting dumbly while various factions rose to power only to fall again, and successive usurpers gambled for power with bands of brigands which they called armies.

Peter watched day by day, in silence. At times his eyes flamed with anger; but he smiled sometimes, too, when he mixed

with the peasants in the station restaurants and ate cabbage soup with a great wooden spoon. For the peasants discussed the strange *Americansky* freely, after assuring themselves that he spoke but little Russian.

One night, seated on his sleeping-shelf, Peter studied his map by candle-light while the car went careening along over the rough road-bed.

"When do we get to Chita?" he asked a Russian trainman.

"Perhaps to-morrow," replied the trainman.

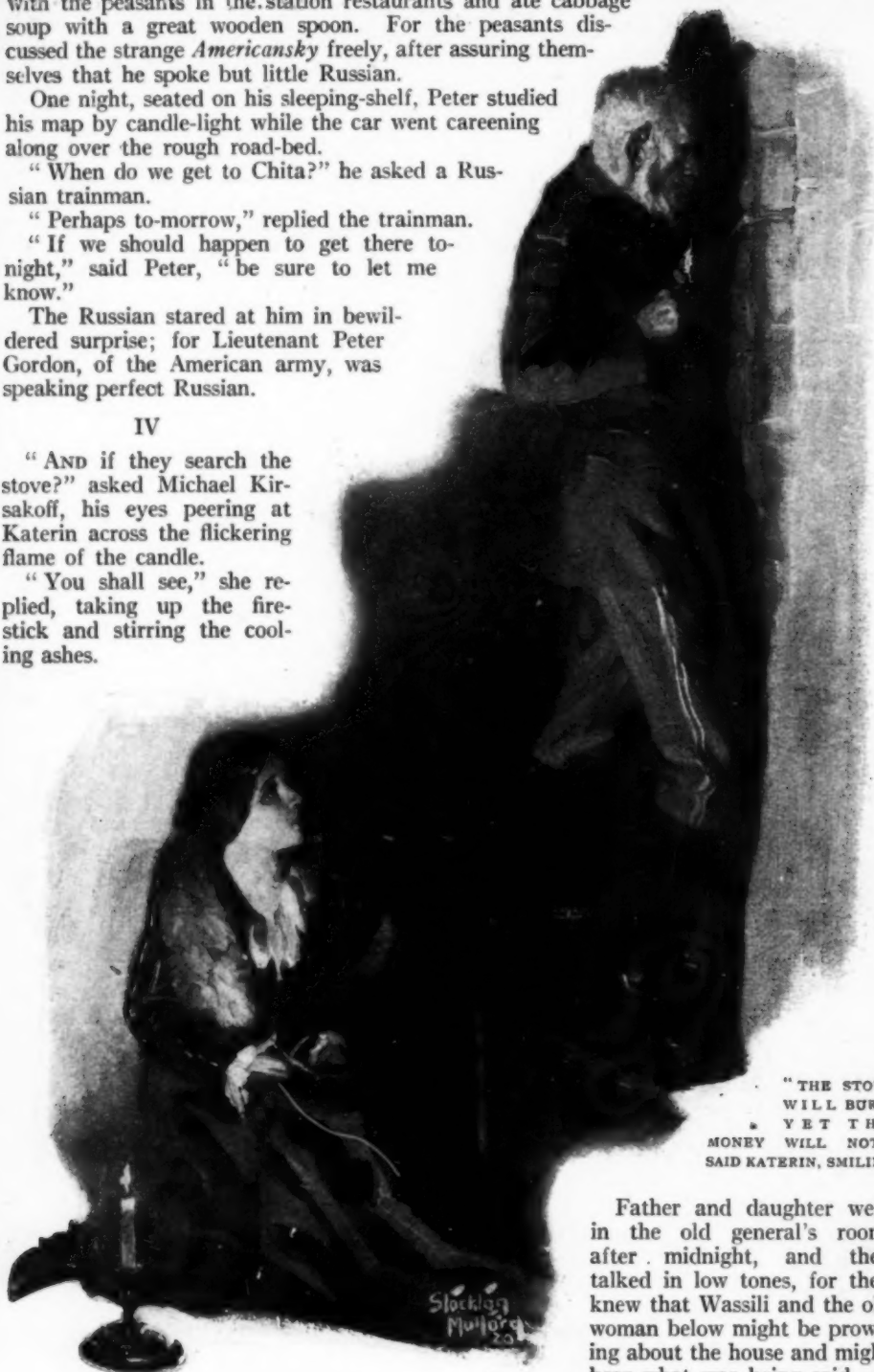
"If we should happen to get there to-night," said Peter, "be sure to let me know."

The Russian stared at him in bewildered surprise; for Lieutenant Peter Gordon, of the American army, was speaking perfect Russian.

IV

"AND if they search the stove?" asked Michael Kirsakoff, his eyes peering at Katerin across the flickering flame of the candle.

"You shall see," she replied, taking up the fire-stick and stirring the cooling ashes.



"THE STOVE
WILL BURN,
YET THE
MONEY WILL NOT,"
SAID KATERIN, SMILING

Father and daughter were in the old general's room, after midnight, and they talked in low tones, for they knew that Wassili and the old woman below might be prowling about the house and might hear what was being said.

A pile of old clothing lay on the floor near the tall black stove which reached to the ceiling. It was more of a pillar than a stove—a thing of tile half built into the wall, and covered with semicylindrical pieces of zinc, once smeared with black paint, but now streaked with rust, and chipped so that the gray metal showed in spots. A small iron door near the bottom admitted the wood.

When a good fire was going, the whole face of the pillar glowed with a steady heat; but now the fire had been allowed to die down. It was for this that Katerin and her father had waited, and for this they had gathered the pile of old peasant clothing—gray coats smelling of stables, and patched till the original fabric was lost in a maze of rags rudely stitched on; great breeches covered with the skins of animals, with bits of dirty fur or wool still sticking to the hides; uncouth jerkins padded with cotton against the bitter cold of many Siberian winters.

"Who is to look for paper money in a burning stove?" asked Katerin, pulling out two charred sticks, which smoked and made Michael cough.

"But if you light the stove, the money will burn," said Michael.

"The stove will burn, yet the money will not," said Katerin, smiling. "Take off the upper sheets of iron for me, and be careful lest they fall and make a clatter, or Wassili will be up to see what we are about."

So Michael, standing on a bench, worked out the old screws which held the zinc plates in place against the fire-tiles inside.

While he worked, Katerin began to rip open the old coat at her feet. From its lining she took out what seemed to be a thick padding—packets of bills of large denomination, from which the dead Czar smiled wistfully under the line of engraving which announced that the paper was money of the imperial government. As Katerin assembled the thin packets into larger ones, they made a colorful pile—blues and crimsons and yellows, some worth a hundred rubles, some worth a thousand.

Two of the coats Katerin set aside, but all the other garments gave up their rich contents, till the floor about her feet was strewn with a fortune—the fortune for which Ataman Zorogoff lusted, and which the Kirsakoffs were determined that he should not have.

By the time Michael had the upper plates off the stove, Katerin was ready to carry out her plan for the concealment of the rubles.

She stood up and examined the rude clay tiles with which the cylinder was faced. They were set in loosely, standing on edge, and behind them were stone blocks mortared together, so that the tiles were not in any way exposed to the fire. They simply retained the heat, and helped to radiate it. Between the stone blocks and the tiles there was an air space, in places irregular, but providing enough room to hold good-sized packets pressed in between the stones and tiles; and by leaving off one or more tiers of tiles at the top, sufficient space for the surplus packets could be found.

Katerin climbed upon the bench, and as her father passed up the packets, she wrapped them with pieces of the old clothes and gaged their sizes so that they would fit the various crevices. They worked thus for more than an hour, while they heard the calls of the sentries out in the street. At times they stopped and listened to the cracking of the frost in the timbers of the house. Once they put out the candle, when they thought they heard some one opening the old gate of the courtyard below; but it proved to be only a whim of the wind with the boards hanging loosely from the old roof of a shed.

When they had finished, and all the rubles were hidden and the zinc plates back in place, Katerin took a piece of candle, and, putting the charred sticks back into the stove, so arranged the candle behind the wood that when she lit the wick, and closed the iron door, a flickering light appeared through the holes in the door.

"There is fire in the stove," said Katerin. "Who is to look for paper rubles in burning stoves? When the ataman's soldiers come to search, you have a fire going in an instant. And even wood can burn and not harm the money."

"We could not do better," said Michael, with an admiring look at Katerin. "Your wits will save us yet, my daughter! That money is all that stands between you and beggary. Even I, alive, without the fortune, could not save you from want. But your treasure! It must be saved to you at all costs."

"I care only for you," said Katerin; "and you are tired and worn. Now go to bed, for we must keep our strength."

She kissed him and went to her own room, where she got behind the curtains and blew a tiny hole in the frost of the window. Outside the night was bright, with a haloed moon throwing a silvery sheen over the glistening plains beyond the city, with black dots of trees here and there, doubled in size by their shadows on the snow. The fire of the sentries out at the end of the street burned redly, and threw into heavy relief the dark forms squatted about the glowing coals.

"Merciful God!" she whispered. "When are we to be saved? We must have help, or we shall perish!"

She went back to her father's room. Seeing that he was in bed, she made sure that he was properly covered, kissed him tenderly, and took away the candle.

In her own room once more, she prayed before the icon, prepared for bed in the dark, and finally fell asleep, worn out with anxiety and fear of what the next day might bring. Now that Zorogoff had found out where they were living, they would have little safety from him.

But the next day came and went without any word or sign from the ataman that he was dissatisfied with the amount of money given to Captain Shimilin. Several days passed, and still there was nothing to indicate that Zorogoff would annoy them any more. They began to hope that something might happen which would distract the attention of the new ruler.

Michael seemed to grow weaker as the time passed. He fretted under the restraint of what was practically imprisonment, and he was anxious about the future of his daughter. He devised many a scheme for fleeing from the city, only to abandon each one, for as Wassili was sent out into the city to buy food and test some of Michael's plans, it was learned that Zorogoff controlled every avenue of escape.

Among other things, Michael had thought of getting a droshky or a sledge and attempting a dash through fog or darkness down the line of the railroad to the Manchurian border. Then they might either get into some Manchurian city, or might board a train beyond the zone of Zorogoff's control.

But though they might slip through the cordon of Zorogoff's Cossacks outside the city, by either eluding or bribing them, it seemed that no one in the city could be trusted. To carry out such a plan, it would

be necessary to take a droshky-driver into confidence, and though he might accept a large price, he might also betray them. And Zorogoff's spies were everywhere.

Then Shimilin came again. His soldiers came pounding at the gate of the courtyard just before noon one day, and the Cossack captain once more faced Michael and Katerin in their room.

"The ataman will have no more excuses, Kirsakoff," he announced, as he threw off his coat and sat down to light a cigarette.

He was frankly arrogant, and looked at Katerin with an air of bold assurance, as if he knew that whatever she might say would be of no avail. And the two soldiers hunted with their eyes over the room, as if settling the value of things in their covetous minds, and deciding what was worth having in the place.

Katerin involuntarily pulled her sable coat closer about her as it fell under the greedy gaze of the pair of soldiers. While she was determined to be outwardly gracious as long as she could, she realized that the time had come to stand out against the demands of the ataman to any extreme, and to abide by the consequences.

Michael sat in his chair by the table. He had been playing a game of solitaire when he heard of Shimilin's arrival, and he had agreed with Katerin that she should handle the situation, with his support when he could add to her moral resistance. They knew that they could not expect to resist with force. If they could not cajole Shimilin, there was no hope for them.

"You mean the ataman expects us to provide a fortune for him? And that having nothing will not be taken as an excuse?" demanded Katerin.

"You can only talk to the ataman with money," said Shimilin doggedly.

"Then we are dumb," declared Katerin. "The dumb have been made to speak," said Shimilin, with serious significance.

Katerin went close to Shimilin, and looked into his black eyes. She spoke in a low voice, but earnestly:

"You—a Cossack—would kill Russians by the order of a Mongol?"

Shimilin sprang to his feet, his face flushed and his eyes menacing.

"Take care what you say about the ataman!"

"It is of you I am speaking," she continued, confident that there was shame as well as anger in him. "My father and I

have always been friends of the Cossacks. If you put a Mongol into power, can you expect him to give you what we Russians have always given you?"

"We Cossacks held up the throne on

"Wait outside," he said with a gesture. "I will call you."

The two went out and closed the door behind them. As they went, they shot angry glances toward Katerin.

"I did not wish them to hear our ataman insulted," said Shimilin, sitting down once more. "I have come here by order of Zorogoff to take your money—all of it. It is only to be a loan,

SHIMILIN LEAPED AT KATERIN, SWUNG HER ROUND AND THRUST HER TOWARD THE WINDOW

our spears—and we have our own master now."

"Why not a Cossack?"

"This is our country, and we shall rule it as we wish. Our ataman is protecting you—and you must help him with money."

"Tribute or death!" cried Katerin. "Is that protection? And you Cossacks can find nothing better to do than to kill Russians for a Mongol chief?"

"Your father ruled here with the help of Cossacks," said Shimilin. "We paid for the bread of majesty by obeying orders, and killing Russians is no new business for us—eh, Michael Kirsakoff?"

"Yes, you were always loyal, it is true," said Michael. "We were proud of you, but a new day has come, when our Cossacks turn against us."

"From the Russian Czar to a Mongol princeling!" said Katerin.

Shimilin turned to his soldiers.

and you will lose nothing in the end. Come, give up the money, and I will promise you safety."

"If we had money, and we gave it," said Katerin, "we should be destroyed, as others have been. We know what has happened—fortunes taken, and then the firing-squad to wipe out the debt. We have no fortune left, so there is no need to destroy us. We are safe because we are poor."

"You do not trust Zorogoff?" asked Shimilin.

"Those who have trusted him are dead," said Katerin.

"Then trust me!" said Shimilin, leaning



forward and whispering so that the soldiers outside could not hear. "Turn over your money to me, and I will promise safety—on my word as a Cossack. Come!"

"We would trust you if there was anything to give," said Katerin, with a glance of caution at her father. "It is you who must take our word that we speak the truth."

Shimilin scowled in disappointment, and seemed to have more to say, but evidently thought better of it.

"You will have a glass of tea with us," said Michael Kirsakoff. "My house is poor indeed, but no man need go away from it without—"

"No!" shouted Shimilin. "I will not have it!"

He went to the door and flung it open. The two soldiers popped into the room.

"Michael Alexandrovitch Kirsakoff, you are to be taken before the ataman. You will go with these men!"

"What?" cried Michael, looking at Shimilin with incredulous eyes. "You are to take me?"

"Arrested?" exclaimed Katerin. "For what—being poor?"

"Call it what you like," growled Shimilin. "Get ready to go. I shall stay here."

"But I shall go with my father," said Katerin, doing her best to conceal the agony that possessed her, for she knew she might never see Michael again if he were taken. "No, no, do not separate us!"

"Have no fear," said Shimilin. "Zorogoff wants to talk with your father, that is all. I shall see that you are safe till he returns."

"I shall go," said Michael, rising unsteadily to his feet. "I do not wish to oppose the will of the ataman. Come, my daughter—my coat and cap!"

Katerin hesitated, scanning Shimilin's face as if seeking the secret motive behind the taking of her father. Then, with sudden resolution, she brought her father's coat and cap, and put them on with loving care. When she had pulled the cap about the old general's ears, she threw her arms about his neck and kissed him.

"God go with you, and may you return to me soon!" she said. "Do not be anxious for me, my father."

"And God be with you, Katerin Stephanovna, the brave one!" replied Michael. "I am ready," he added, turning to the Cossack captain.

"Take Michael Kirsakoff to the ataman," Shimilin ordered.

The two men fell in beside the old governor, who marched out of the room, doing his best to keep his legs from betraying the unsteadiness of age. He crossed himself twice, and at the door turned and said:

"Hope is mightier than fear—remember that you are the daughter of a soldier!"

Then he turned and was gone, while Katerin stood with folded arms staring at the open door. Her face was white, her lips drawn tightly together, as she listened to the footfalls of her father going down the stairs. She remained thus till Wassili came up and peered in at the door, with dumb agony in his eyes, and by his look questioning the truth of what he had just witnessed below.

"See that the doors are properly closed," said Katerin, and the muzhik went down again.

She walked to a chair and sat down facing the stove, partly turned away from Shimilin, and ignoring his presence. She watched the flame flickering inside the stove behind the iron door, her hands gripped together in her lap.

"Where is the money?" demanded Shimilin, turning from the window.

Katerin looked at him, moving her head slowly till her eyes took in his figure as if it were something which she had never seen before.

"There is no money," she said, speaking as if in a dream.

"I do not enjoy this business," said Shimilin, trying to cajole her. "If you would trust me—"

"I trust only in God," she said, and turned away from him.

Shimilin walked across the room, passing behind her. He drew a glass of water from the samovar, and poured into it some tea from the pot on top of the silver heater. He drank noisily.

There came the sharp crack of a board being broken in the court. Katerin turned her head in an attitude of listening, startled somewhat out of her daze.

"We know there is much money hidden somewhere," Shimilin resumed presently. "Why do we have all this trouble about it? It is bad. You could be happy and gay, if you would trust me with it."

"Perhaps you will have another cup of tea," said Katerin.

"Do you wish to see your father again?"

demanded Shimilin sternly. "I warn you—you must submit to our will!"

"I submit only to the will of God."

"Why are you so stubborn?" he asked, and then returned to the window.

The warmth of the room had melted the frost from the upper part of the panes, and the ridge of ice across the bottom of the window was steadily dripping water to the floor, like the ticking of a clock.

Shimilin stood where he could watch Katerin, but she continued to gaze into the fire. Her face was drawn, as if she were crying; but she made no sound, and her eyes were free of tears. She was breathing heavily, and her bosom rose and fell as if she were suffering great pain.

There came a dull sound of blows from the courtyard below. Katerin, startled and mystified, looked toward the window, and made a move as if she would get up and look out; but she did not leave the chair, though she sat up straight, her terror growing, as she gradually interpreted what she heard from below. Heavy blows were being struck on frozen ground, and occasionally there came the rasping of metal on stone.

"What is that?" cried Katerin, her voice rising almost to a scream.

"Come and look!" invited Shimilin.

Katerin stood up and started for the window. Before she had gone half-way, she stopped abruptly. Wassili was shouting below stairs.

"Oh, mistress! The soldiers—"

Wassili's cries ended with sounds of a scuffle, and the harsh warnings of soldiers to be still.

Katerin ran to the window. Then she gave a gurgling cry, as if she had been

struck in the mouth, and threw her hands up to her face, to shut out the sight that met her gaze. Below in the courtyard her father was working with a shovel, throwing up the frozen brown earth, which a soldier was breaking with a pick. The courtyard was filled with soldiers.

Katerin backed away from the window, sobbing wildly, and threw herself upon a bench.

"You have seen," said Shimilin. "Now tell me where is the money!"

Katerin stood up and faced him.

"You have betrayed us, you murdering devil!" she cried. Then, turning her back to him, she held out her arms to the icon. "Have mercy on the soul that goes to greet you—mercy, mercy!"

There came a shrill whistle from the yard. Shimilin leaped at Katerin, and, grasping her by the shoulders, swung her round and thrust her toward the window.

"Look!" he commanded.

She saw her father standing with his back to the wall of the court, and six soldiers before him with their rifles upraised and aimed at the old general. She fell back against Shimilin, almost in a faint. Recovering herself, she staggered away from the window, and fell upon her knees in prayer, her head bent toward the icon.

"I can save your father," said Shimilin.

"Tell me where the money is—or when I lift my hand in the window, the soldiers will fire!"

"I, too, am ready to die," she said. "I commend the soul of my father to God. You have betrayed us to the Mongols!"

Shimilin raised his hand swiftly to the window.

(To be continued in the March number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE)

TO ONE WHO GOES ABROAD

GUARDED through enormous space
By the unseen Captain's eye,
Where gigantic shoals of suns
Fill the night with majesty,

Stars on every side awash,
Earth's our ship that travels far,
Plunging to the ports of God
Swifter than a falling star.

Go, then, if you will, and find
Other countries, other friends;
We've a common voyage still
Down a way that never ends!

Harry Kemp

The Colossal Pension List of the United States

THE FEDERAL PENSION BUREAU HAS ALMOST SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND NAMES ON ITS ROLLS, NOT INCLUDING MEN INJURED IN THE WAR WITH GERMANY, AND IT HAS NOW UNDERTAKEN THE CARE OF SUPERANNUATED GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

By Frank D. Byington

United States Commissioner of Pensions

IN Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address there is a phrase—"to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan"—which very aptly expresses the purpose for which the Pension Bureau was created. Fifty-five years afterward it took up another important task, when the Sterling-Lehlbach bill "for the retirement of employees in the classified civil service" became a law and the Pension Bureau was designated to adjudicate claims under the new statute.

The record of the work of the Bureau of Pensions is remarkable, both for the stupendous sums disbursed and the number of persons served, to say nothing of the close scrutiny which must follow every application for a pension in order to insure that, if granted, the money shall go to the rightful recipient for the purposes intended. Yet this work has not been very prominently before the attention of the public, although it deserves attention, and it is for this reason that the following facts are recited.

The total amount disbursed by the Treasury of the United States through the Pension Office since 1790, and including the fiscal year 1920, is nearly six billions of dollars—to be exact, \$5,830,815,717.04. This sum has been paid to pensioners of the Revolution, of the War of 1812, of the early wars with the Indians, of the Mexican War, of the Civil War, of the Spanish-American War and the subsequent insurrection in the Philippines, and of the world

war; also to other pensioners of the regular military and naval forces and a few "unclassified" pensioners.

The largest number of names on the roll in any one year was in 1902, when it totaled 999,446. In 1866 there were 126,722 pensioners. After having reached the maximum thirty-six years later, the total gradually began to decrease, until last year it fell to 592,190—a net reduction of 32,237 from the total of the previous year. Since 1910 the loss of Civil War soldiers has averaged about thirty thousand a year; the largest number of them on the roll—745,822—was in 1898.

The pensioners are not all soldiers, of course, or even former soldiers. They also represent widows, minor children, dependent parents, and army nurses. Nearly four thousand of them are scattered over wide areas outside the United States, from China to Norway and from Tasmania to Mauritius.

Losses to the pension roll are caused not only by death, but also by the remarriage of widows, by minors attaining the age of sixteen years, by failure to claim for three years, and by other causes. Gains are made chiefly by original allowances, but also, in some cases, by the restoration of forfeited pensions.

WHERE RED TAPE IS NECESSARY

It is obvious that with nearly six hundred thousand pensioners scattered in sixty-four countries, there is much possibility of mistakes and misunderstandings, if not of

fraud. Handling pension claims is routine work, but it requires painstaking care. Nothing must be taken for granted. Furthermore, it may be said that in certain respects the laws make the bureau's work more difficult than it need be.

Many people have an erroneous impression of the workings of the Pension Bureau. They regard it as a simple thing to take up a pension claim and immediately dispose of it. As a matter of fact, it is often a most complicated matter. The numerous pension laws have required much consideration and interpretation, and there are twenty octavo volumes containing the opinions of the Secretary of the Interior on questions that have arisen in pension cases.

In claiming a pension, an application must be filed in the Pension Bureau setting forth under what law the claim is made, and stating the facts on which it is based. After the validity of the declaration is determined by the Law Division, a record is made and the claim receives a number. This record is made in various ways for statistical purposes and for information, and so that the claim may be readily found. There are about six million record cards on file to-day.

The claim is then submitted to adjudicating divisions made up of persons who by training, study, and experience have qualified themselves for securing, examining, and weighing the evidence on which pension claims are based. In due time the Board of Review gets the case. No claim is rejected unless it has been considered and disallowed by an examiner, a reviewer, and a final reviewer, while every claim that is allowed must have the concurrence of three persons of the same class.

Frequently it is necessary to make an inquiry in the field. Such inquiries concern the merits of doubtful or difficult claims, or those in which criminal features are involved. Should a medical question present itself for solution, it is sent to the proper division, which has the assistance of about four thousand physicians throughout the United States. Should questions of law arise, they are sent to the Law Division, which passes upon questions relating to attorneyship, guardianship, marriage, and divorce.

Under these circumstances it is clear that the Bureau of Pensions is not a mere administrative office. It is a court called upon to construe the law and to exercise judicial

functions, determining the rights of claimants and of the government under the law and facts.

A HARDSHIP TO SOLDIERS' WIDOWS

There are many cases in which the marital status of parties must be determined—not an easy matter, because the law provides that marriages shall be proven in pension cases to be legal marriages according to the law of the place where the parties resided at the time of marriage, or at the time when the right to pension accrued.

Hardly any two States of the Union have the same laws concerning marriage and divorce. There are presumptions of the validity of marriages contracted in some of the States which are not permitted in others. Decrees of divorce in certain States may deny the right of one or the other party to the marriage contract to remarry; in other States a divorce in every case discharges the parties from the obligation of the marriage contract and frees them absolutely.

Complaints have been frequent because of the rigorous requirement of the law as to the proof of validity of the marriage relation. Many cases occur in which claimants for pension are required to go back twenty, forty, and even fifty years to prove the death or divorce of former spouses, so as to make clear the legality of their own relation.

In many cases this imposes a peculiar hardship upon widow applicants. After meeting the soldier, going through a ceremonial marriage with him, and living with him in the ostensible relation of husband and wife for a long period of time, the widow, after his death, is called upon to prove whether he had ever been married before, and, if so, what had become of his former wife or wives. There should be an amelioration of the present stringent rule, but the matter is, of course, wholly for Congress to decide.

It might, for instance, be declared that cohabitation for a fixed period of time up to the date of the soldier's death should give rise to a conclusive presumption, for pension purposes, that the wife thus cohabiting was the legal widow of the soldier to the exclusion of any other.

Some men, when they marry, are not communicative as to their previous history. Some wives feel that they have no concern about the matter, and make no inquiries.

Sometimes, after the soldier husband's death, the widow learns to her dismay that children born as she supposed in lawful wedlock may have the stigma of bastardy; and she is denied a pension because she is unable to prove that the soldier was legally divorced from a former spouse, of whom she knew nothing until after his death.

The Pension Bureau has no power under the law to change its long-continued practice, but the hardship imposed upon worthy women becomes more manifest as time goes on. It is hoped by officials of the bureau that the situation will before long be remedied by the Congress.

FIGURES FROM THE PENSION ROLL

The number of certificates issued on account of all claims allowed since the establishment of the pension system, down to the end of the fiscal year 1920, is 1,333,054, exclusive of reissue and increase claims. The number of pensioners of the different wars on the rolls at that date (June 30, 1920) offers some interesting figures.

Seventy-one pensions were still being paid on account of the War of 1812, though more than a century had passed since the termination of the war. All of these were drawn by soldiers' widows, there being now no survivor of the men who fought in that far-distant conflict.

We still had 2,571 pensioners of the Mexican War, seventy-two years after the struggle ended. Of these 148 were survivors of the American forces and 2,423 widows of soldiers.

Of Civil War pensioners—by far the largest class on the roll, though now a rapidly diminishing class—there remained on the rolls a total of 533,620, including 243,520 survivors and 290,100 widows. During the year 27,871 Civil War soldiers and 21,752 widows, minor children, and dependents were removed from the roll by death.

The brief war with Spain in 1898 had produced, to that date, 41,427 pensioners. Of these 30,432 were on the roll on June 30, 1920.

On May 1, 1920, there was approved an act to revise and equalize rates of pensions to certain soldiers, sailors, and marines of the Mexican and Civil Wars, including widows, former widows, dependent parents and children, and certain army nurses. A few weeks later another act was approved

to pension soldiers and sailors of the Spanish-American War, including the Philippine insurrection and the relief expedition in China.

After the passage of these acts, a section of experts was formed to investigate and determine promptly where increases could be granted to the pensioners already on the roll in cases not requiring new applications. This work has been well and expeditiously done; and yet on December 1 there were still more than seventy-three thousand claims on file under the operation of these two acts.

PENSIONERS OUTSIDE OF THE BUREAU

An unusual situation now exists as to the consideration and payment of claims for pension and compensation as provided in the act of 1917, which for the first time in the history of the government took away from the Pension Bureau the adjudication of claims based upon naval and military service. It calls the bounty of the government "compensation" instead of "pension," but the purpose and meaning of both terms is exactly the same.

Attention has been called to a number of concrete cases where the jurisdiction of the Bureau of War Risk Insurance conflicts with that of the Bureau of Pensions. In many such cases this conflicting authority eventuates in independent allowances by each bureau, resulting in double payment by the government—a situation which it is safe to say that Congress would never knowingly have sanctioned.

Considerations of efficiency, economy, and good business administration demand that the adjudication of claims on account of death or disability incurred in line of duty in the military or naval service of the United States subsequent to the declaration of war against Germany should be placed under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Pensions. Since the foundation of the republic all the pensions paid to soldiers, seamen, and marines have been paid through our bureau. All the archives relating to such claims are on file there. We have a continuous record in regard to such matters, without a break since the beginning of the government.

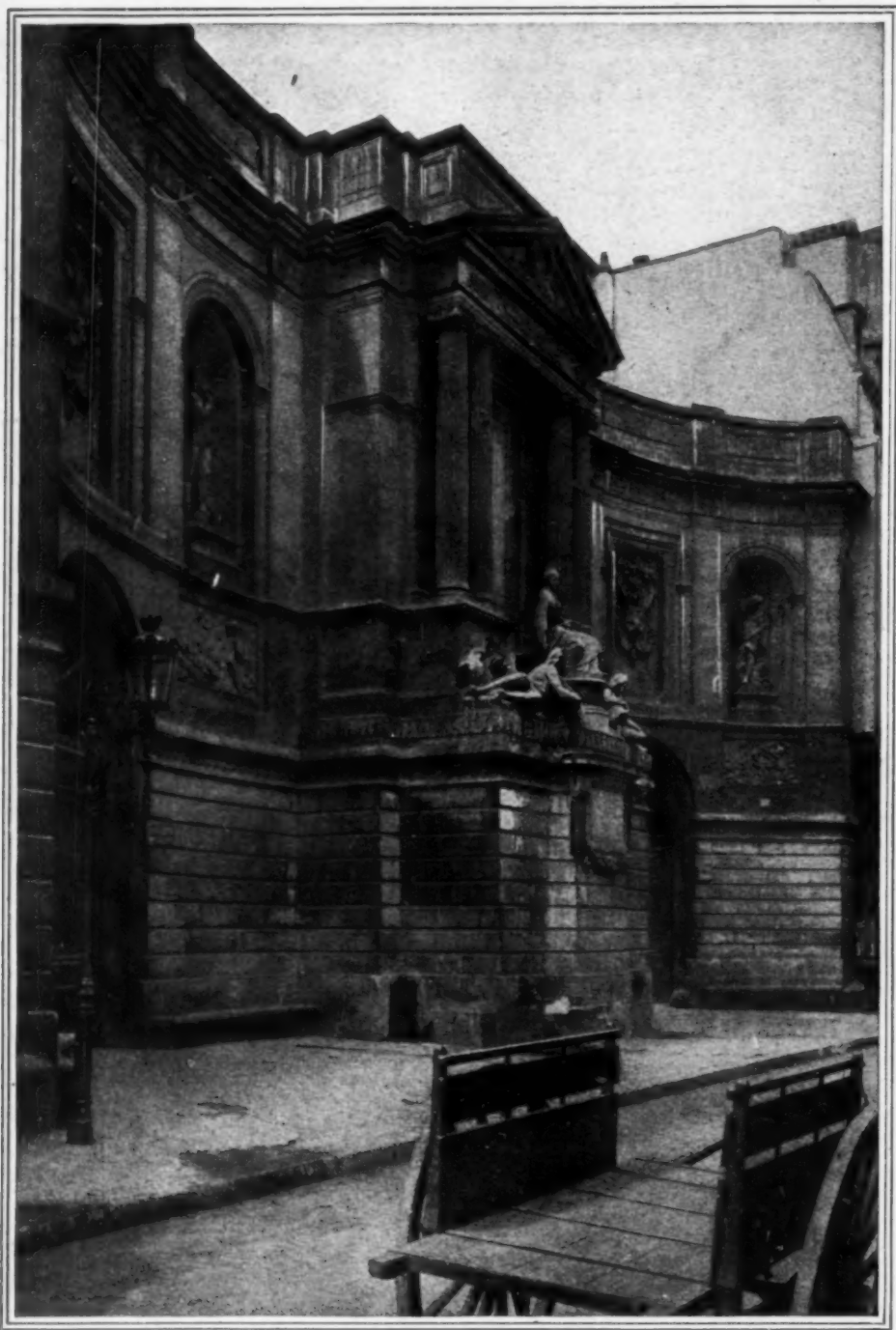
For these reasons such records and documents as may have been filed in the Bureau of War Risk Insurance in connection with claims for compensation would fit better in the older bureau.

Picturesque Corners of Old Paris

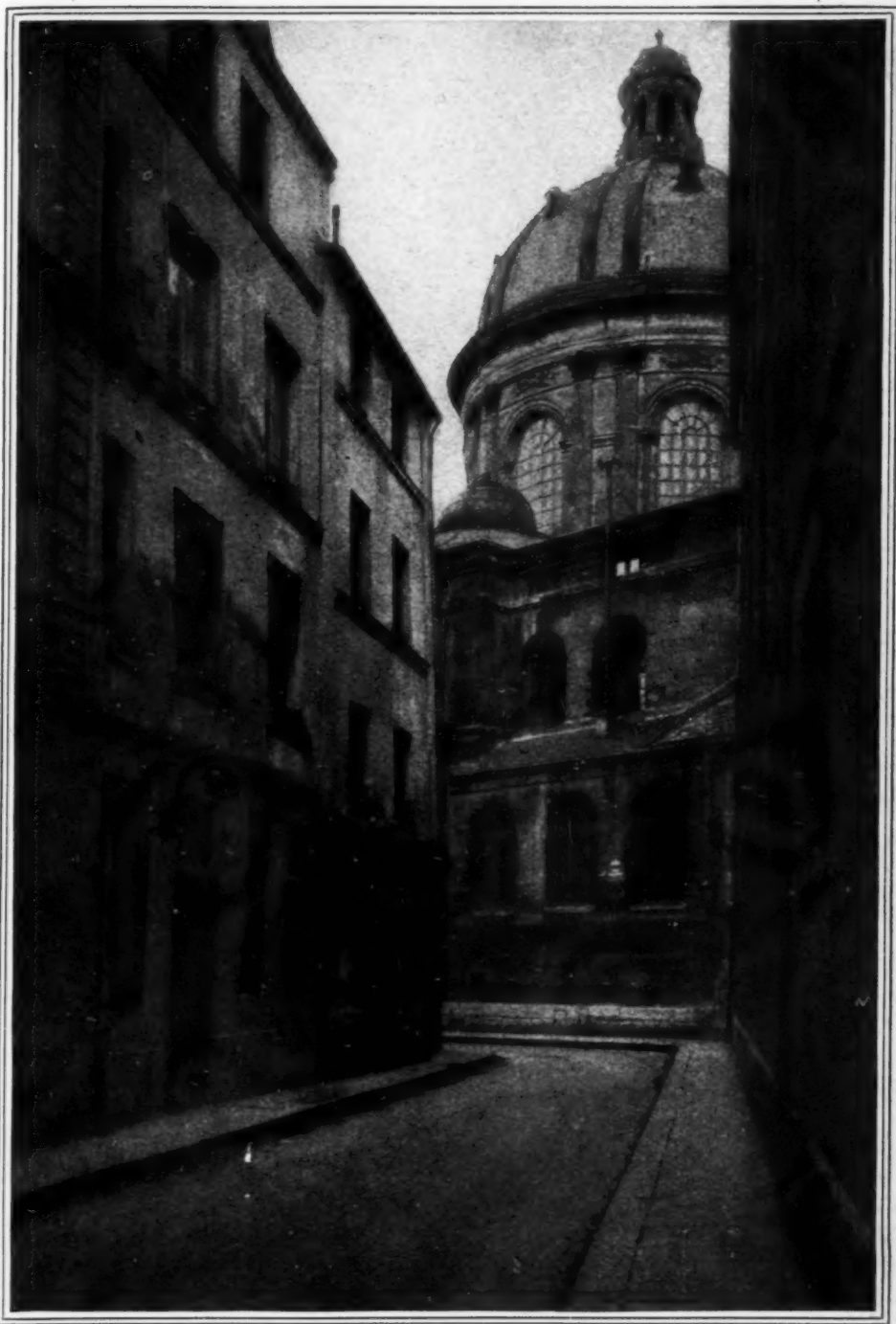
A SERIES OF ENGRAVINGS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS THAT SHOW SOME OF THE MOST INTERESTING SPOTS TO BE FOUND IN THE HISTORIC STREETS OF THE FRENCH CAPITAL, WHERE QUAIN'T SURVIVALS OF THE MIDDLE AGES STAND SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE SPLENDID MONUMENTS OF MODERN ART



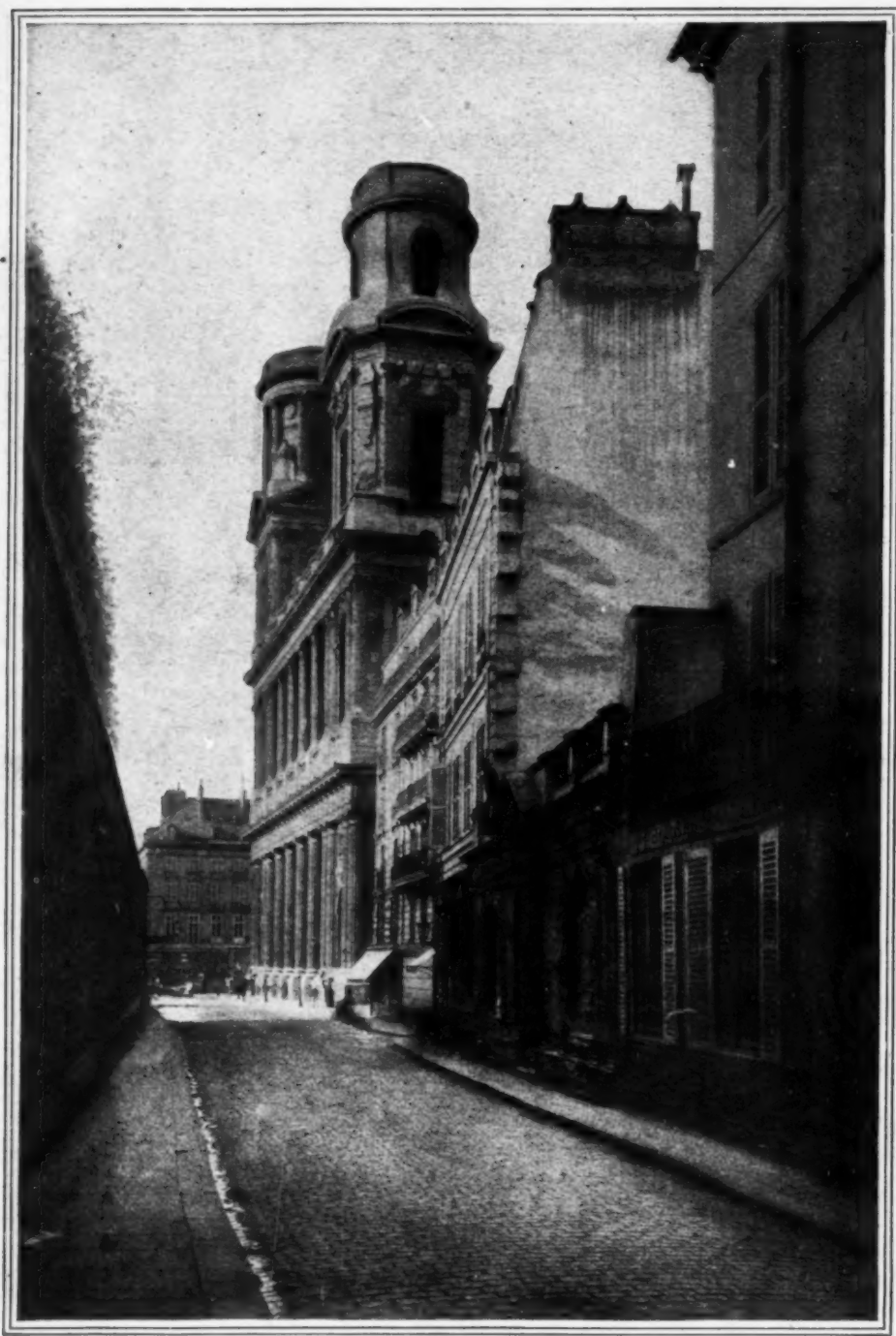
THE FONTAINE DE MARS, ONE OF THE MANY SMALL FOUNTAINS TO BE FOUND IN THE OLDER STREETS OF PARIS—THIS IS IN THE RUE ST. DOMINIQUE, IN THE DISTRICT BEHIND THE CHAMBRE DES DÉPUTÉS, WHERE THERE ARE NUMEROUS OLD MANSIONS OF THE FRENCH NOBILITY, LONG SINCE FALLEN FROM THEIR HIGH ESTATE



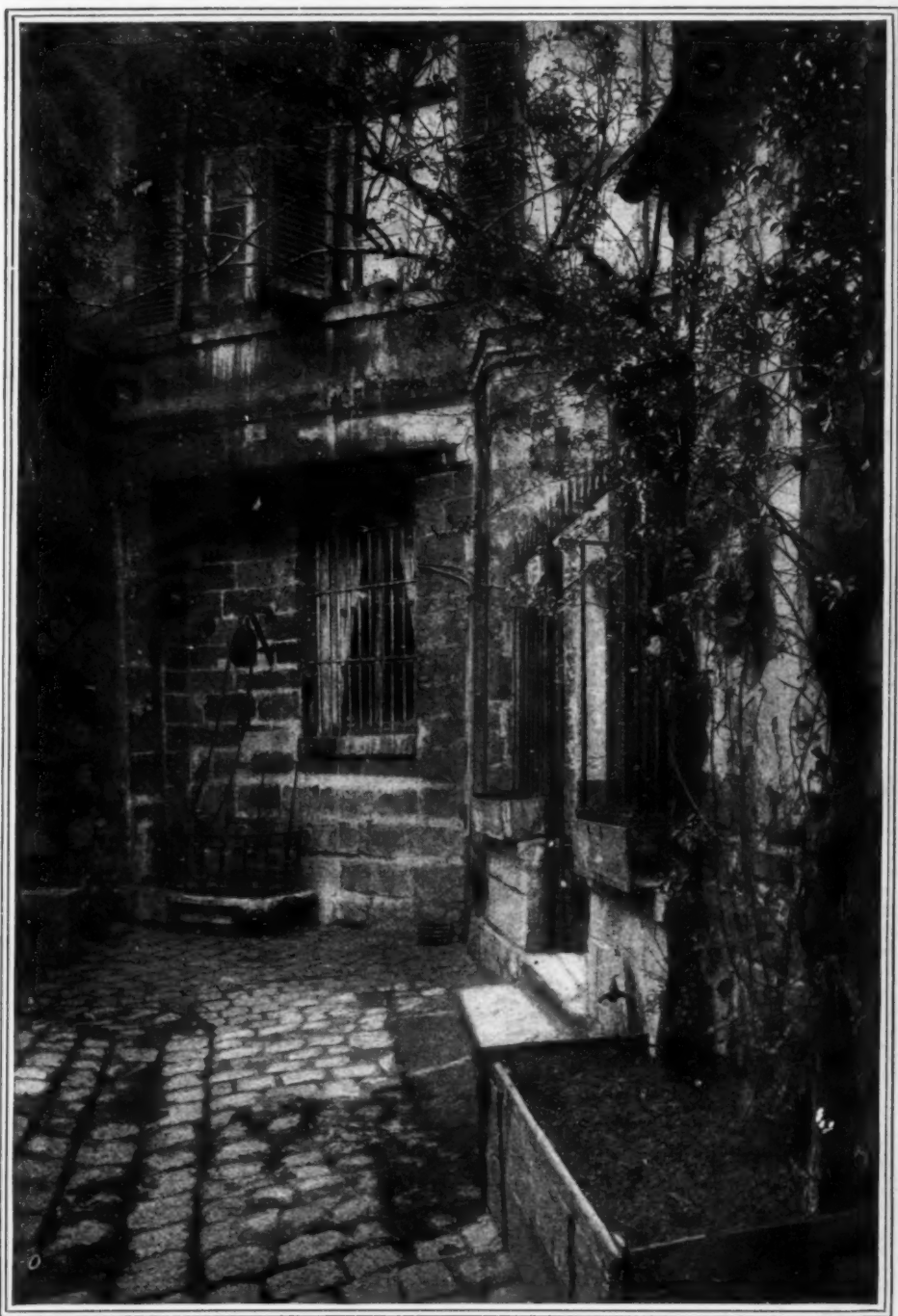
THE FONTAINE DE GRENELLE, ON THE RUE DE GRENELLE, DESIGNED BY BOUCHARDON AND BUILT IN 1739—THE CENTRAL GROUP OF STATUARY REPRESENTS PARIS AND HER RIVERS, THE SEINE AND THE MARNE



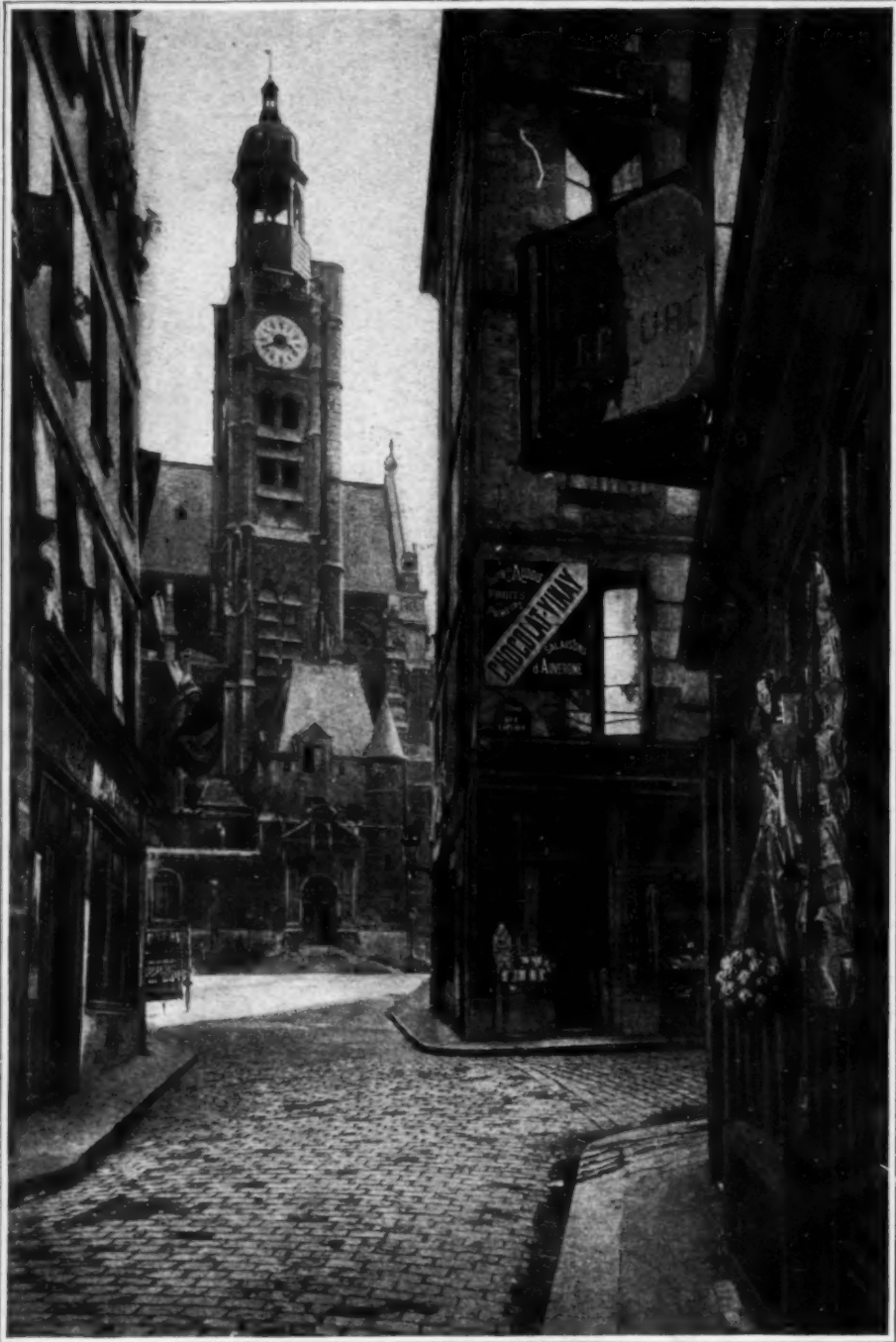
THE RUE MAZARINE, ONE OF THE NARROW, WINDING SIDE STREETS OF THE ST. GERMAIN QUARTER, ON THE LEFT BANK OF THE SEINE—THE DOME IN THE BACKGROUND IS THAT OF THE INSTITUT DE FRANCE, THE HOME OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY



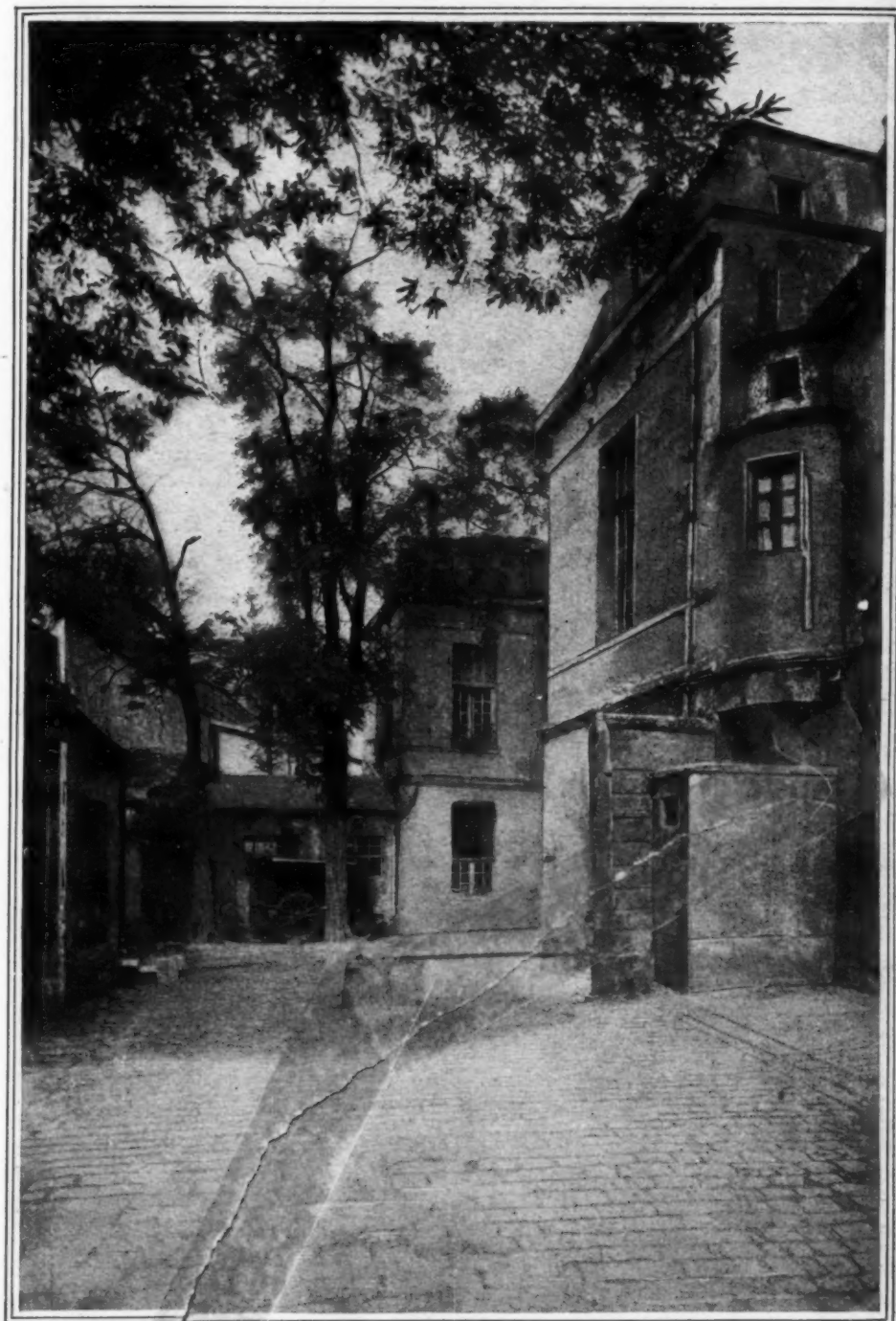
ON THE RUE FEROU, IN THE ST. GERMAIN QUARTER, LOOKING TOWARD THE CHURCH OF ST. SULPICE, A FINE CLASSICAL BUILDING ERECTED UNDER LOUIS XIV AND LOUIS XV—
ON THE LEFT IS THE WALL OF THE SEMINARY OF ST. SULPICE



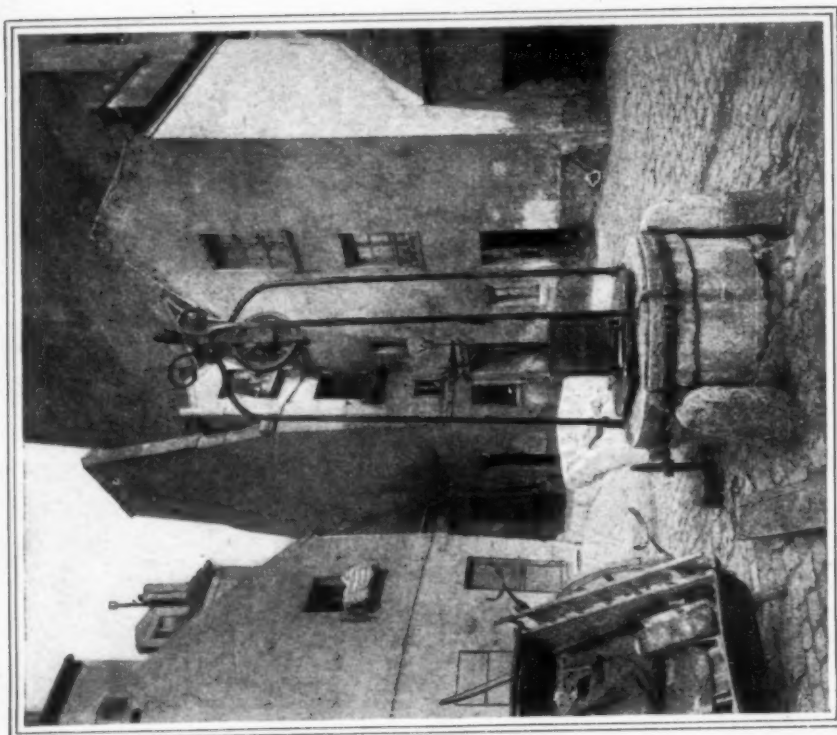
THE COUR DE ROUEN, A QUAIN OLD CORNER OPENING OFF THE RUE ST. ANDRÉ DES ARTS, IN THE LATIN QUARTER—THE BUILDING IS PART OF THE FIFTEENTH-CENTURY PALACE OF THE ARCHBISHOPS OF ROUEN



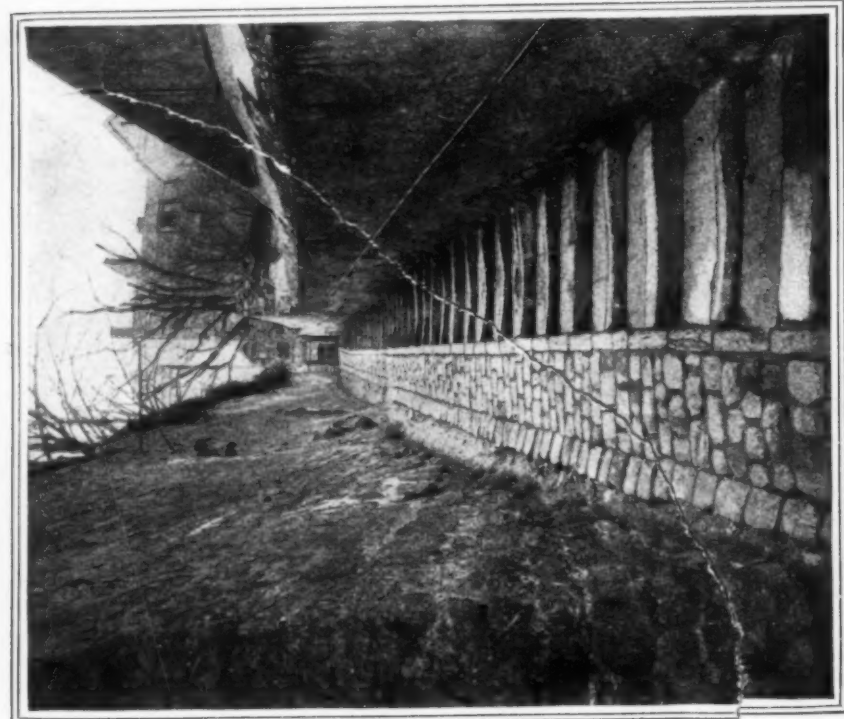
A CORNER OF THE RUE DE LA MONTAGNE STE. GENEVIÈVE, IN THE LATIN QUARTER, LOOKING TOWARD THE CURIOUS OLD CHURCH OF ST. ETIENNE DU MONT—THE CHURCH WAS BUILT IN 1517-1541, BUT THE TOWER WAS PROBABLY PART OF AN EARLIER STRUCTURE



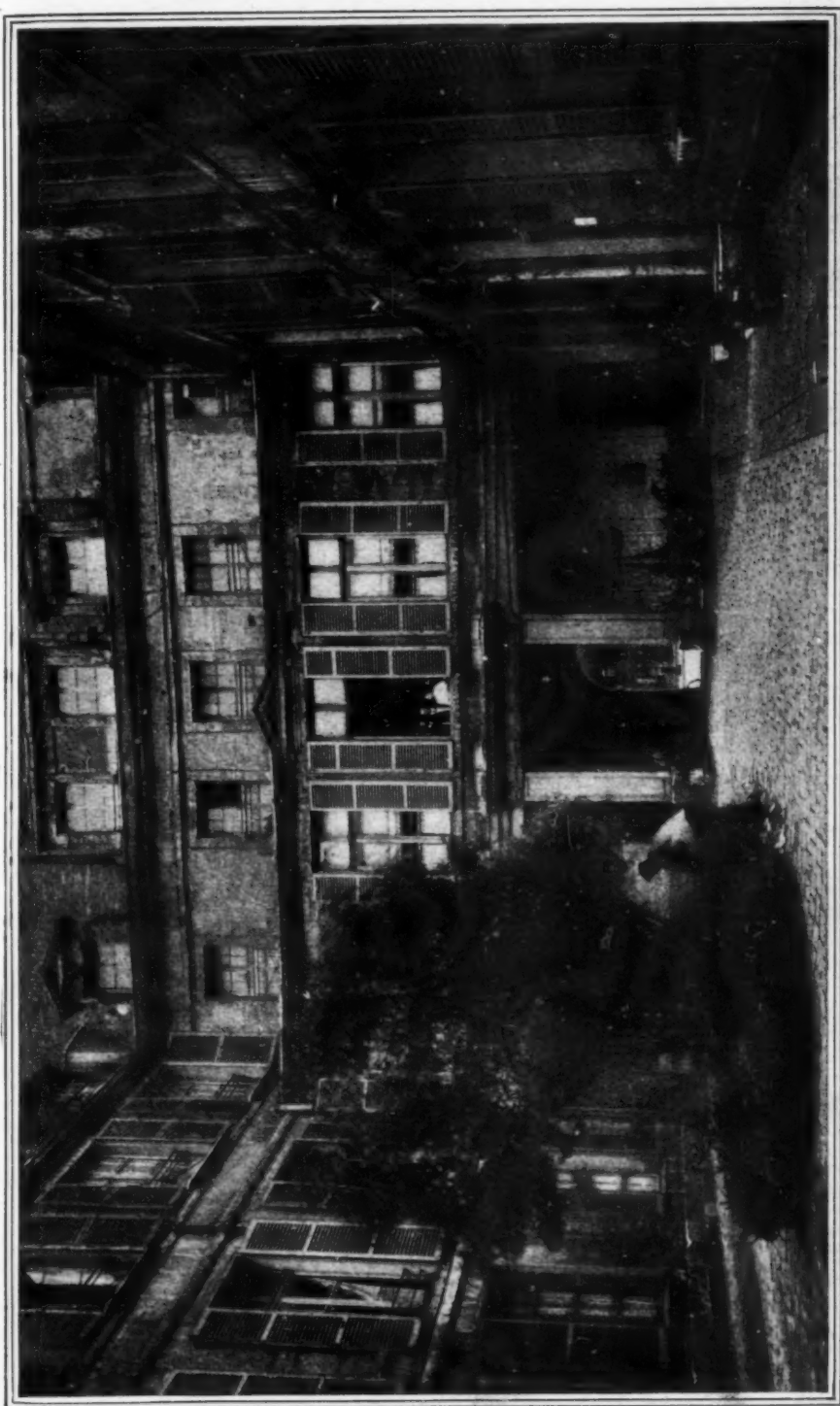
COURTYARD OF THE OLD CARMELITE CONVENT ON THE RUE ST. JACQUES, IN THE SOUTHERN QUARTER OF PARIS BEYOND THE LUXEMBOURG—LOUISE DE LA VALLIÈRE, MISTRESS OF LOUIS XIV, RETIRED TO THIS CONVENT IN 1675



AN OLD WELL IN A COURTYARD OPENING OFF THE RUE ST. JACQUES,
CLOSE TO THE CARMELITE CONVENT SHOWN ON
THE PRECEDING PAGE



THE PASSAGE DES EAUX, A CURIOUS LITTLE BYWAY OF THE PASSY
QUARTER, A RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT OF WESTERN
PARIS, NEAR THE BOIS DE BOULOGNE



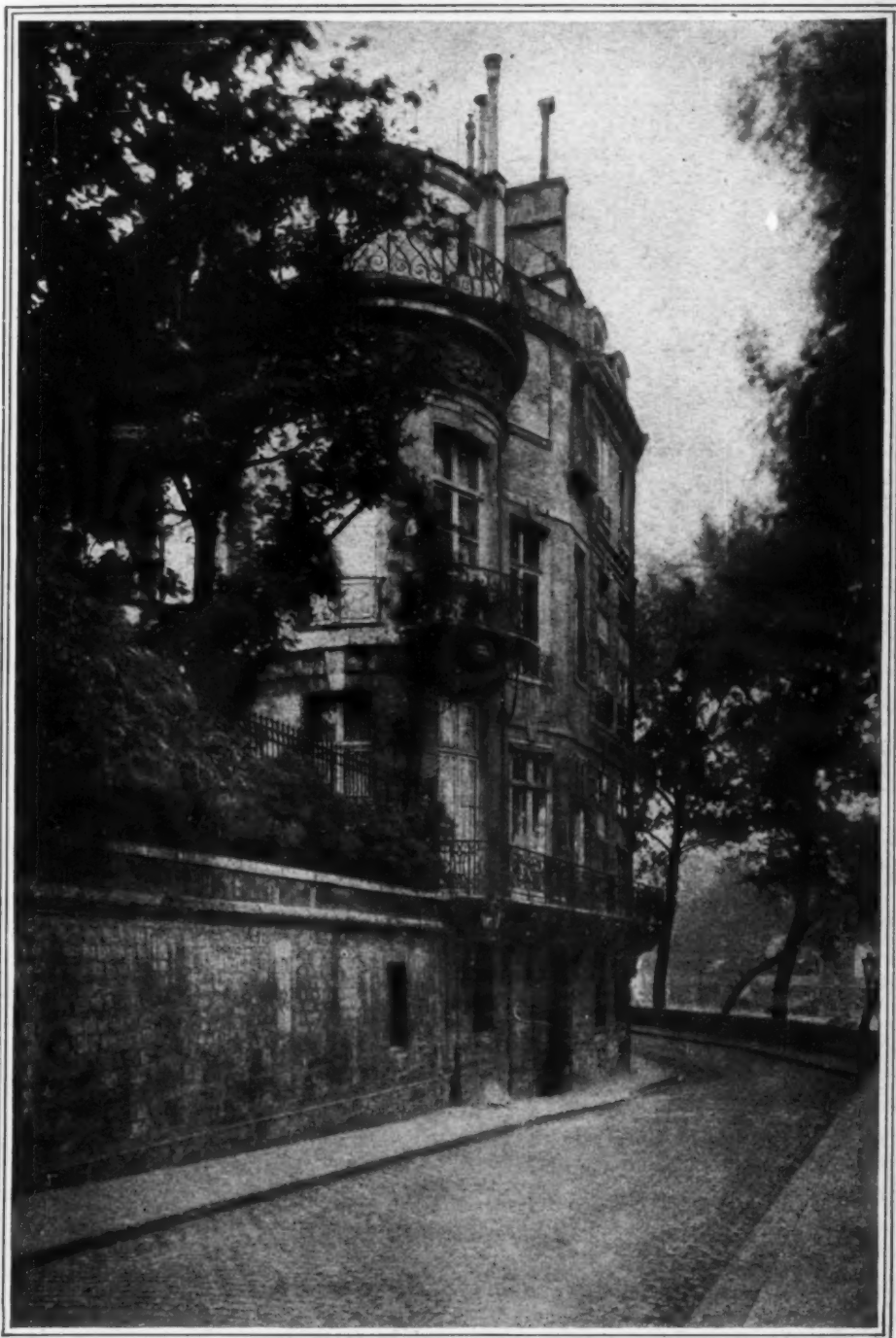
COURTYARD OF THE HÔTEL DU MARÉCHAL DE CHAULNES, ONE OF THE FINE OLD HOUSES ON THE PLACE DES VOSGES, IN THE QUARTIER DU MARAIS,
THE DISTRICT NORTHEAST OF THE HÔTEL DE VILLE, ONCE FASHIONABLE, BUT NOW GIVEN OVER TO TRADE AND MANUFACTURES



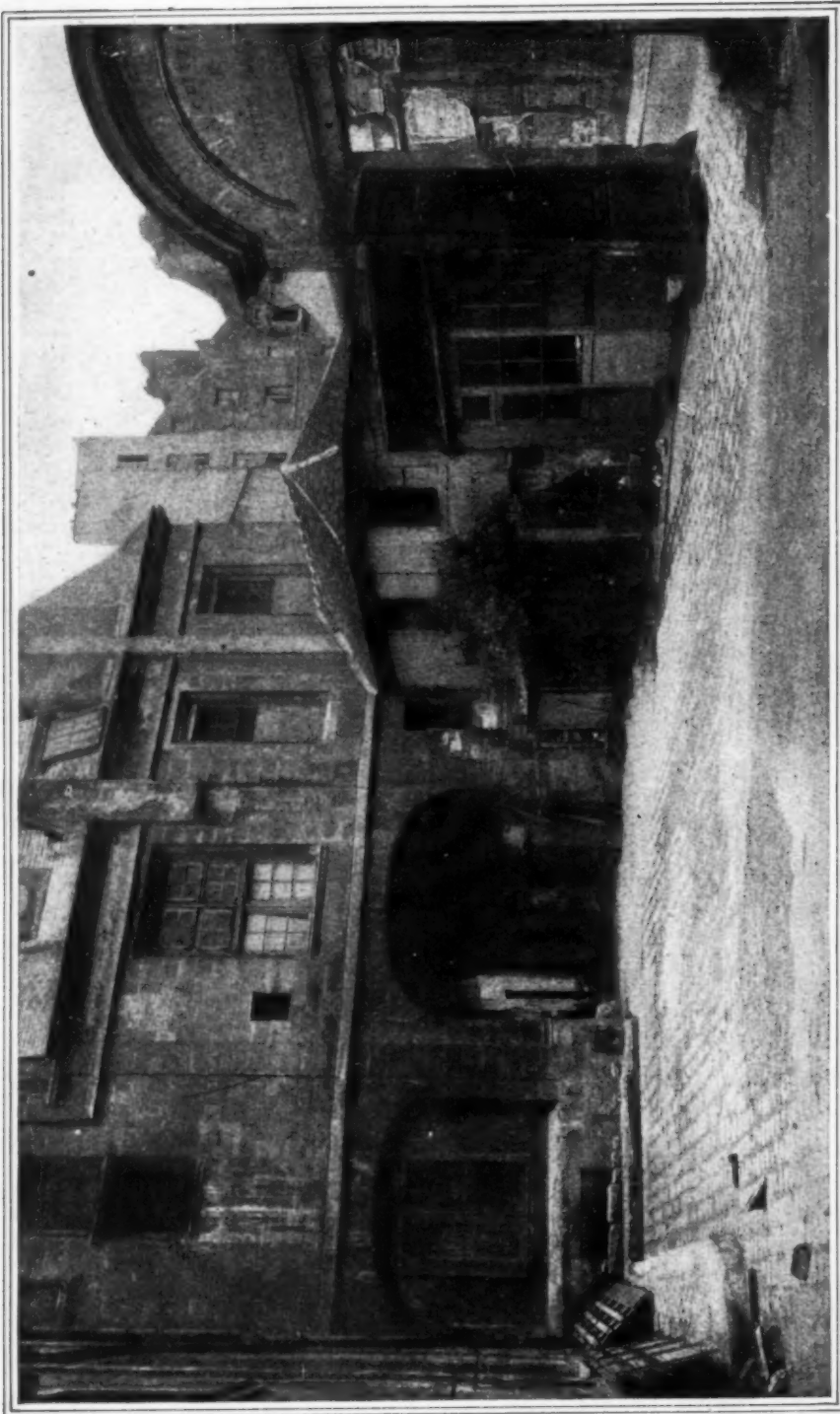
MASONRY OF THE BASTILLE, PRESERVED IN A LITTLE PARK ON THE QUAI DES CÉLESTINS,
NOT FAR FROM THE SITE OF THE FAMOUS FORTRESS-PRISON



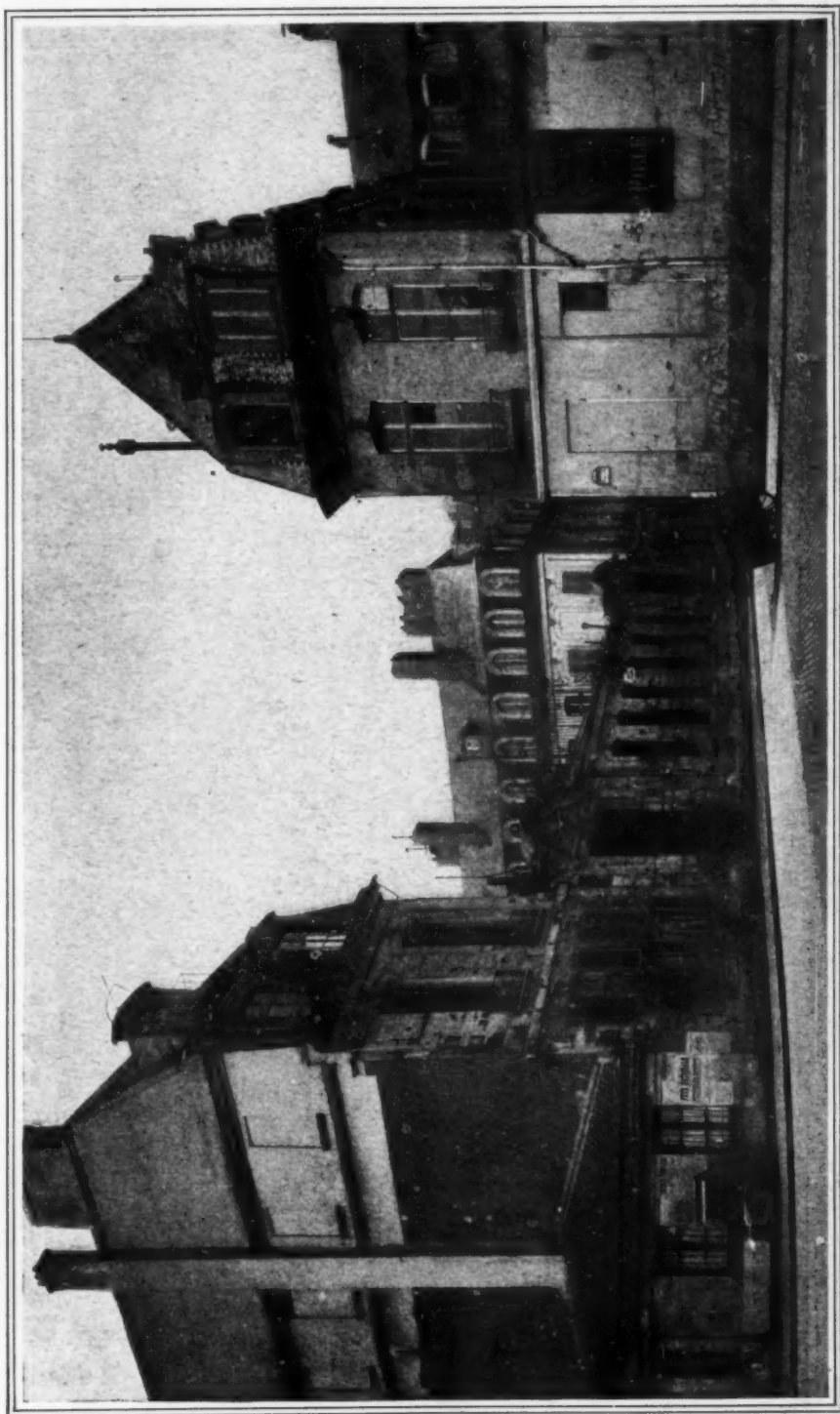
ARCADE ON THE PLACE DES VOSGES—THIS OLD SQUARE WAS THE PLACE ROYALE UNTIL ITS
NAME WAS CHANGED AT THE TIME OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION



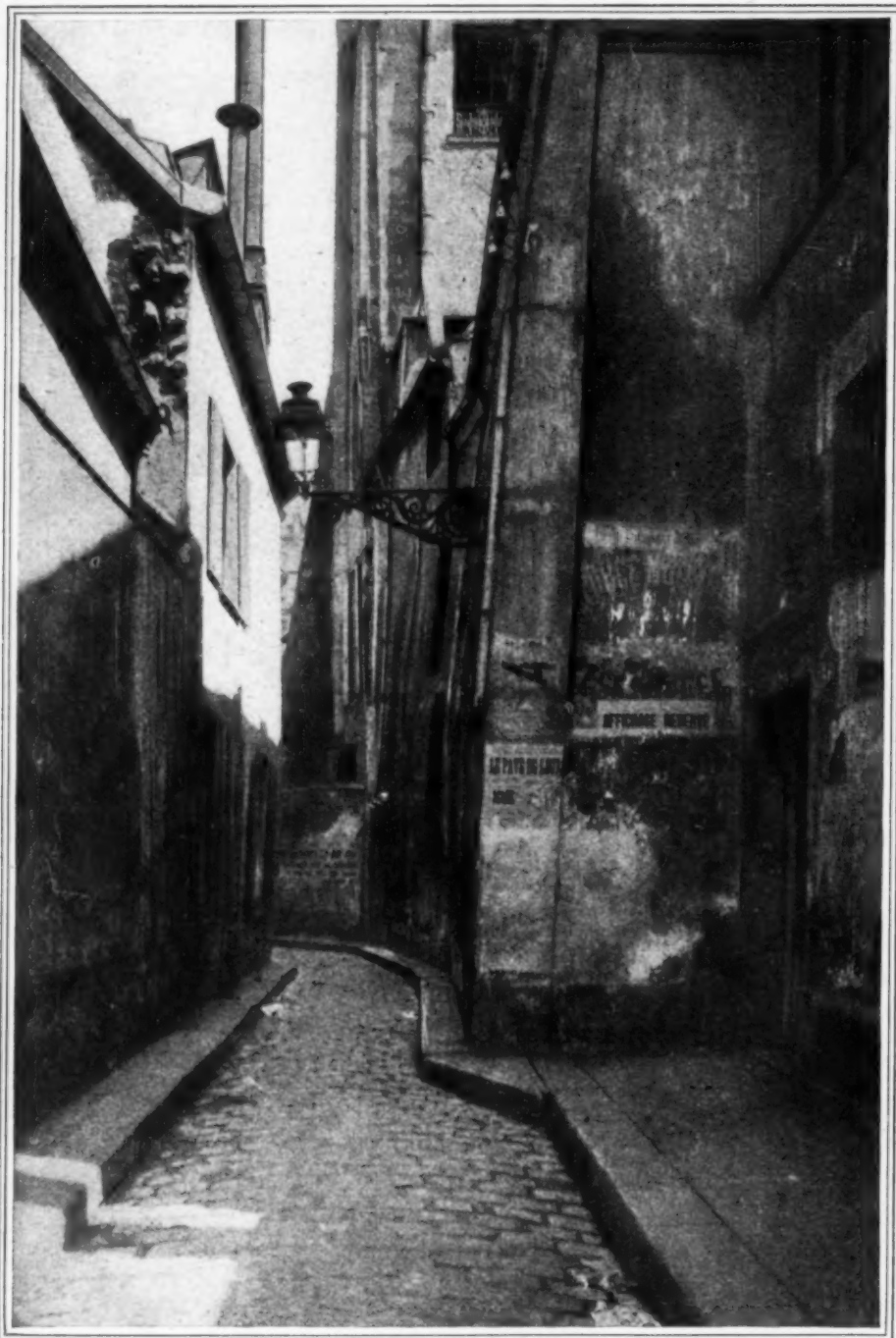
THE QUAI D' ANJOU, ONE OF THE QUIET STREETS OF THE ÎLE ST. LOUIS, THE SMALLER OF THE TWO ISLANDS IN THE SEINE THAT FORM THE VERY HEART OF PARIS—THE HOUSE IS THE HÔTEL LAMBERT, IN WHICH VOLTAIRE ONCE LIVED



COURTYARD OF THE HÔTEL DE LA VIEUVILLE, ON THE QUAI DES CÉLESTINS, ON THE RIGHT BANK OF THE SEINE, ABOVE THE HÔTEL DE VILLE—
THIS WAS ONCE THE RESIDENCE OF THE DUC DE LA VIEUVILLE, FINANCE MINISTER IN 1649



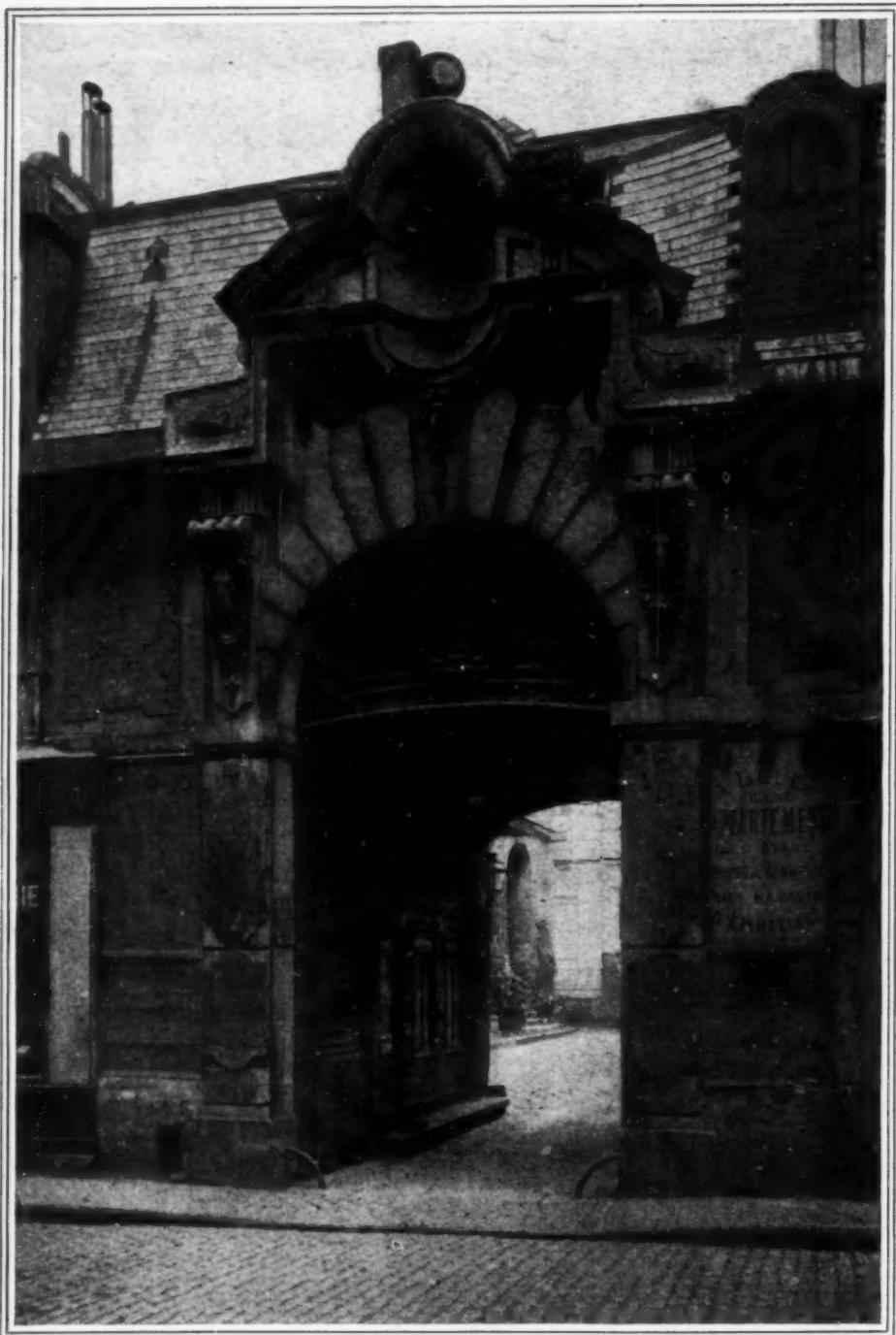
THE RUE BÉRANGER, IN THE QUARTIER DU TEMPLE, SO-CALLED FROM THE OLD STRONGHOLD OF THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR, THE SITE OF WHICH IS NOW OCCUPIED BY THE MARCHÉ DU TEMPLE—IN THE HOUSE ON THE LEFT THE POET BÉRANGER DIED IN 1857



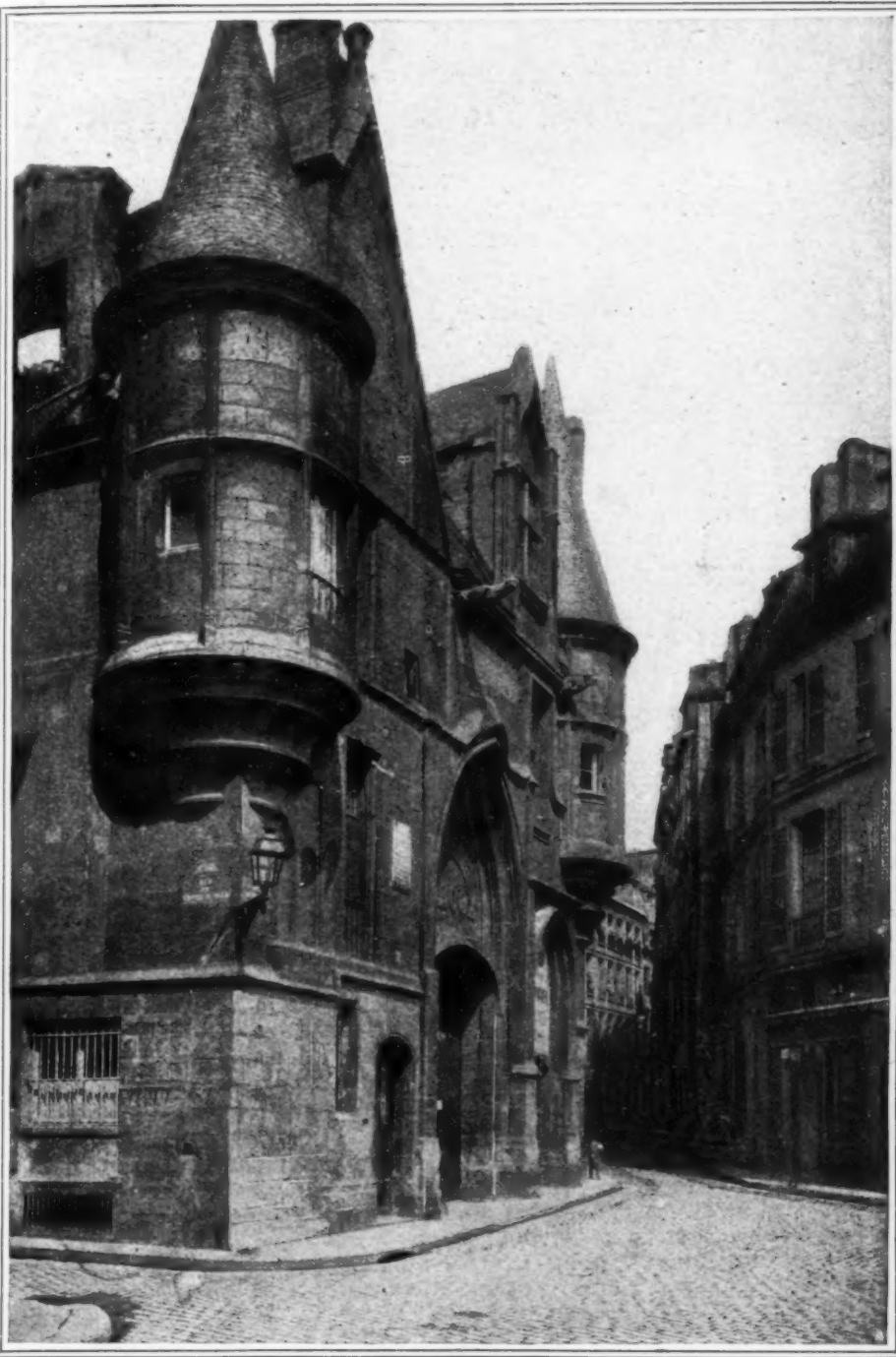
THE RUE DU MAURE (STREET OF THE MOOR), ONE OF THE NARROW, WINDING STREETS OF THE OLD QUARTER OF PARIS EAST OF THE HALLES CENTRALES (CENTRAL MARKET), THROUGH WHICH NAPOLEON III CUT THE BOULEVARD DE SEBASTOPOL



ANOTHER QUAIN, WINDING STREET OF OLD PARIS—THE RUE DE L' HÔTEL DE VILLE, NEAR
THE SEINE, IN THE DISTRICT NORTH OF THE RIVER AND EAST
OF THE HÔTEL DE VILLE (CITY HALL)



THE GATEWAY OF A HOUSE ON THE RUE DES FRANCS BOURGEOIS (STREET OF THE FREE CITIZENS), IN THE QUARTIER DU MARAIS—A TYPICAL SPECIMEN OF A FINE OLD PARISIAN MANSION FALLEN TO LOW ESTATE



THE HÔTEL DE SENS, AT THE CORNER OF THE RUE DU FIGUIER AND THE RUE DE L' HÔTEL DE VILLE—THIS INTERESTING FIFTEENTH-CENTURY BUILDING, NOW THE OFFICE OF A GLASS-FACTORY, WAS ONCE THE PARIS RESIDENCE OF THE ARCHBISHOPS OF SENS

The Woods Go West

THE TITLE IS TRUE IN TWO SENSES, FOR OUR LAST IMPORTANT RESERVE OF
TIMBER IS IN THE PACIFIC COAST STATES, AND EVEN THAT
IS THREATENED WITH EXTINCTION

By L. C. Everard

Of the National Forest Service

WHEN George Washington carried despatches from Virginia to what is now Pittsburgh, he had a terrific struggle making his way through the great forests that barred the road. In these same deep woods Braddock's ambushed veterans huddled together at the war-whoop of the Iroquois, invisible in the thick gloom under the giant trees. When Abe Lincoln wanted to break a record at rail-splitting, all he had to do was to go out behind the house and take his pick of fine hardwoods—oak and elm and black walnut.

It is only a little more than a century and a half since the primeval forests around Pittsburgh hid the savage redskin in his ambush; but now the Pittsburgher who wants to build a home goes a thousand miles to find the trees he needs for lumber. While Lincoln was still alive, the army contractors of the Civil War were buying up the black walnut rails from the fences to make gun-stocks.

The American frontier has traveled westward at a dizzy speed, largely because of the abundance of fertile soil and of wood and water. In the middle of the nineteenth century, when desert country barred the way, the frontier took a mighty leap over and around the arid lands and beyond the Rockies to where there was again an abundance of wood and water. The arid country was enveloped like a fortress in the path of an advancing army, to be reduced later by siege operations, such as irrigation.

In the wake of the advancing frontier of civilization have marched the clearings in the forest. To most Americans progress and clearings were synonymous in meaning. To be sure, *Natty Bumppo*, better

known to readers of Fenimore Cooper as *Hawkeye*, hated a clearing; but *Natty* was unique even among hunters in taking this attitude toward the forest. For more than a hundred and fifty years the whole spirit of America was centered on that "progress" which meant the annihilation of the wilderness.

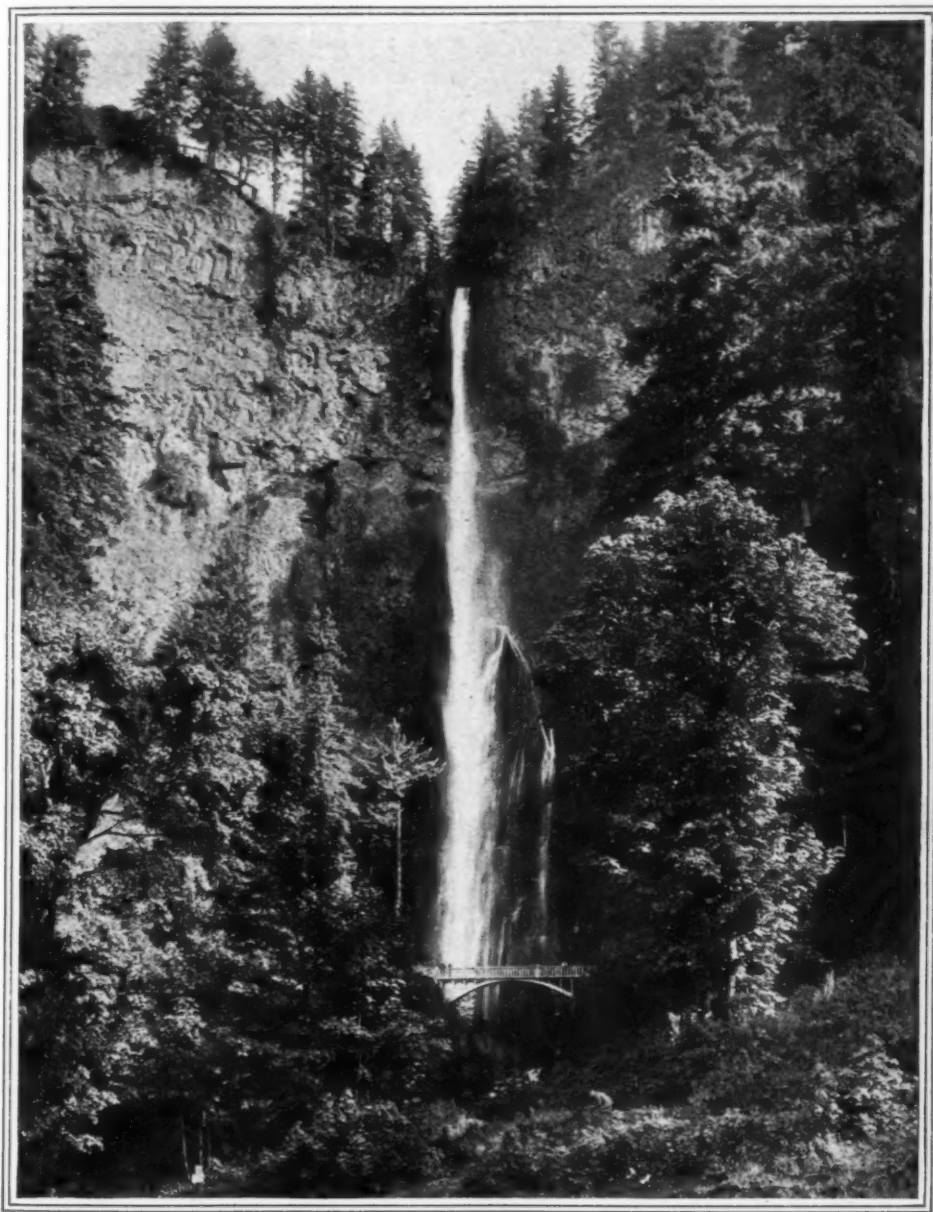
The army of civilization advanced at a tremendous pace, literally living off the country. The buffalo were almost exterminated in a few decades, because of the need of the advancing hosts for food, clothing, and shelter, an astonishing proportion of which came from the great buffalo herds. The same policy was followed with the forests. Here, fortunately, the supply was greater, and the forest will probably never suffer the fate of the buffalo; but the chief producing regions have been steadily driven southward toward the Gulf of Mexico and westward toward the Pacific, until the gleam of water has appeared through the trees and we have come to the realization that our timber frontier, like the frontier of our settlement, will, on its next move, have to leap the ocean or "mush" north to Alaska.

The extensive investigation of the lumber and timber situation just made by the Forest Service, in accordance with a Senate resolution, revealed the fact that three-fifths of the original saw-timber supply of the United States is gone. About half the remainder is in the three States that border the Pacific Ocean. A good deal of the other half is in the South; and big Southern pine operators, after looking hard at their timber supplies, cannot see more than enough for about fifteen years' operations.

Unless something changes the trend

which has been obtaining in the lumber business, it looks as if our Pittsburgh home-builder would soon have to keep the rain out of his house with weatherboarding fetched all the way from the Pacific Northwest. An expert on lumber markets and prices recently stated:

Two years ago the predominating species in the Middle Western markets was Southern pine. During the past year (1919) Douglas fir from the Pacific Coast has advanced to first place in these markets as far east as Chicago. In addition, Douglas fir has been strengthening its foothold proportionally in the Eastern markets to the Atlantic seaboard, and has even entered into the Southern States to the Gulf. The Southern pine



A TYPICAL SCENE AMID THE FORESTS OF THE PACIFIC COAST STATES, WHOSE PRODUCTION NOW DOMINATES THE LUMBER MARKET AS FAR EAST AS CHICAGO

market has shrunk accordingly. This condition is, of course, largely the result of the inability of yellow pine production to meet the demand.

The white pine of the Lake States is almost gone. It went the way of the buffalo, and in much the same fashion. Just as the pioneers got meat and clothing cheaply by practically exterminating the buffalo, so the great agricultural settlement of the upper Mississippi Valley and the plains region was built on the destruction of the white-pine forests of the Lake States.

THE PENALTY WE ARE PAYING TO-DAY

The lands on which these forests grew now lie there unoccupied and unproductive, a dreary waste of swamp and sand, with here and there a few ruined shacks to mark the sites of former flourishing sawmill towns. The buffalo have disappeared, and

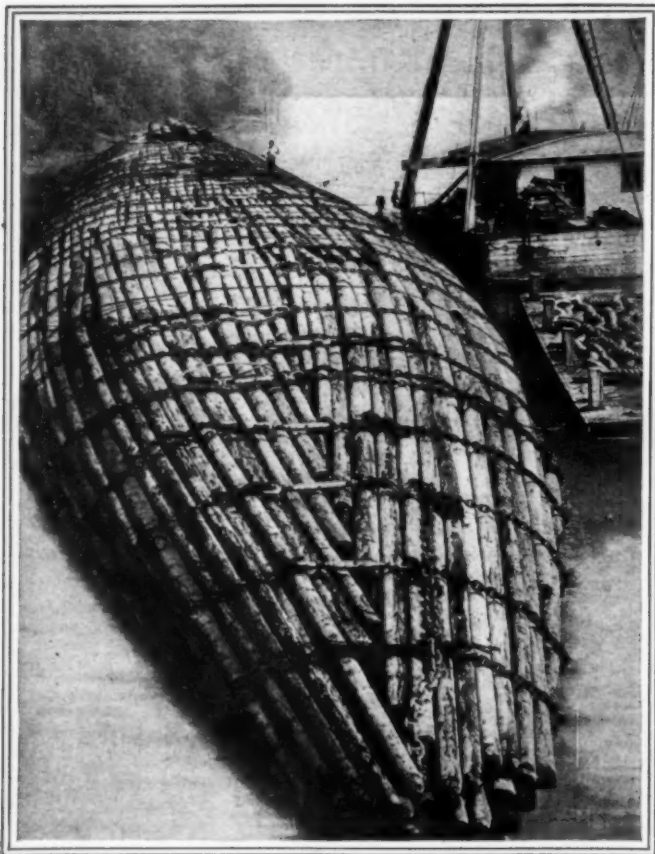
nobody thinks about them much; but the denuded white-pine lands of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota are an eyesore and a problem to these States.

Living off the country may be all right for the men who do it. They may even make life easy for themselves by the process. It is those who come after that suffer the consequences; and we are those that come after.

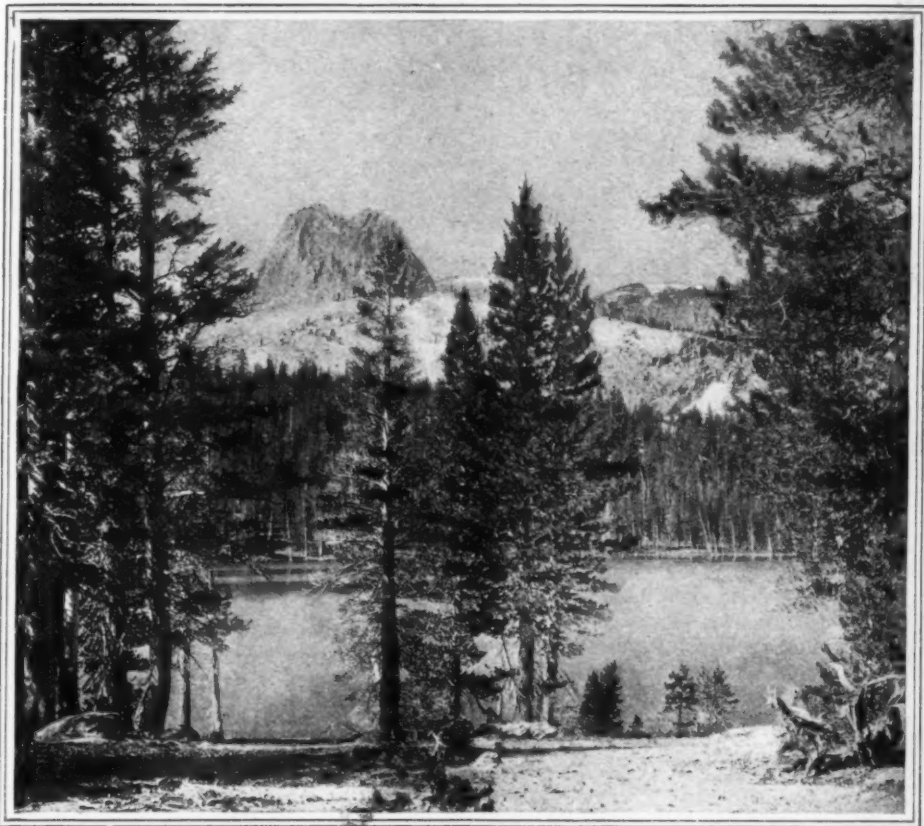
So far as the forests are concerned, the process of living off the country began with the first settlements on the Atlantic seaboard, and it has been continued because there was always more forest and plenty of timber just beyond the line of settlement. I suppose it would still be going on in the same way and with the same recklessness, but for the line of water that has at last appeared through the trees along the Gulf and the Pacific. The woods have, literally and metaphorically, been "going West."

Of course there is a lot of timber left, but we are using it four times as fast as we are growing it. Destructive methods are still employed; fires are still allowed to burn unchecked in many places; and little provision is being made in lumber operations on private lands for renewing the forest. It is still "going West" at an alarming rate.

The pinch resulting in part from depletion of the forests is being felt keenly by the whole country. High lumber prices have interfered seriously with home-building. As an instance of the tremendous change from the days when abundant and comparatively cheap lumber made it easy for an American to own his own home, and to maintain a high standard of comfort, the Pittsburgh home-



A SEAGOING LOG RAFT ON THE PACIFIC—THIS IS THE CHEAPEST METHOD OF SHIPPING TIMBER FROM THE NORTHWEST TO SAN FRANCISCO AND OTHER PORTS



A TYPICAL MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPE IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST, WHICH NOW CONTAINS OUR LAST IMPORTANT RESERVE OF TIMBER—THE LEADING COMMERCIAL SPECIES IS THE DOUGLAS FIR, SPECIMENS OF WHICH APPEAR IN THE FOREGROUND OF THIS PICTURE

builder of 1913 paid \$27 per thousand board feet for his two-by-four framing; but he who wished to build in 1920 had to pay \$72. In the same period of time yellow pine finish increased from \$42 to \$140. If, instead of yellow pine, our friend used oak, for which the 1913 price was \$85, he would probably have to pay \$260.

Some of this increase is due to the war and other causes; a good deal is due to depletion of near-by forest regions. The result of high prices and of the difficulty in getting supplies of lumber has been fewer homes and in general a reduced standard of living. The whole social and economic structure of American life is likely to be profoundly affected for the worse.

A BLOW TO MANY INDUSTRIES

The same condition that affects a man's ability to own his home—or, indeed, even to find a place to lay his head—also affects

the business by which he earns his bread. Farming, the greatest and most important business of all, feels the pinch especially, for the farmers are among the largest users of lumber and other wood products. The high prices and the difficulty in getting supplies interfere with the farmer's efforts to make his farm attractive to his children and to provide such conditions as will hold his help and keep them from migrating to the city. The railroads, the furniture-makers, the box-manufacturers, and most of all the newspapers—which are printed on paper made out of wood—have all found their business hampered to an alarming degree by the difficulty of securing the "stuff" with which to work.

Ten years ago the United States produced practically all the news-print paper it needed. In 1919 we had to import what amounted to two-thirds of all that we used!

In the naval stores industry—turpentine,

rosin, and the like—America has led the world for a hundred years, and still leads by a tremendous margin; but if we keep on the way we are going, and at the same gait, we shall be practically out of the export business in ten years. It would be almost too much if we should have to import turpentine from the artificially planted forests of southern France. We have had a considerable number of gold-egg-laying geese—a whole flock of them; but unless we quit taking our economic philosophy from this kind of bird, we are likely to become beggars in the end.

HOW WE MIGHT USE OUR WASTE LANDS

This does not mean that we should not make the fullest use of all our natural resources. Quite the contrary. In the words of Chief Forester Greeley, "timber depletion has resulted, not from using our timber resources, but from failure to use our timber-growing land. The area of idle or largely idle land is being increased by three to four million acres annually as the cutting and burning of forests continue. The enormous area of forest land in the United States not required for any other economic use, estimated at four hundred and sixty-three million acres, would provide an ample supply of wood.

"The answer to the forestry problem of the United States is, therefore, not to use less wood but to grow more, to put our idle acres of burned and logged-off timberland at work growing trees. This is not an inherently difficult thing to accomplish. It is not the Utopian dream of a technical enthusiast. Three-fourths of it lies in preventing forest fires, but it does require also an aggressive national policy of reforestation. It requires concerted action by the national and State governments. It requires a clear definition of public and private responsibilities as to timber-growing land, with an equitable showing of the cost. There is no phase of our whole problem of an assured and perpetual supply of timber that cannot be met by simple and obvious measures, once we secure the backing of the constructive effort of the American people and of their capacity for organized cooperation."

The enormous excess of depletion over growth of timber is due partly to needlessly large losses from fire; but it is due most of all to wasteful methods of cutting and to neglect of the cut-over and burned-over

lands of the United States. The waste land devastated by fires and cutting now lying neglected, with practically nothing growing on it, would cover the combined forest area of France, Germany, Holland, Denmark, Switzerland, Spain, and Portugal. And there is three times as much land bearing second growth on a large part of which wasteful cutting, excessive grazing, or lack of protection, has prevented the growth from being more than a small fraction of what it might be.

The experience of other countries, and the results obtained in the United States where forests have been carefully treated, show that these areas would be able to meet indefinitely all our needs for wood and other forest products; but we cannot expect this result if we simply shut our eyes tight and wait for nature to make up for our lack of foresight.

We have the land. We know what it needs. The returns are practically certain. What we have to do now is to hitch up our plow and get out into the field alongside of the hired man, who cannot be expected to do it all by himself. It concerns every one of us, from those who want to build a house to those who are merely interested in reading the morning newspaper.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO SAVE THE WOODS

One of the first furrows that need turning is an extension of the so-called Weeks Law which will enable the Forest Service to assist the States in fire protection, methods of cutting forests, reforestation, and the classification of lands according to whether they are more suitable for agriculture or for timber production. The present law provides for a limited aid from the Federal government to the States, but it is much too restricted both as to amount and as to kind. It needs such extension as will enable the Forest Service to carry forward a nation-wide drive against the chief cause of devastation—forest fires—and at the same time to secure the adoption of such measures as may be needed to stop denudation in particular regions and to aid in the restocking of lands already denuded.

Legislation is also needed which will permit the rapid enlargement of the National Forests; and current appropriations for reforestation on the National Forests need to be greatly increased. With these measures should be combined a study of forest taxation and insurance, a survey and classifi-

cation of our forest resources, and a great increase in our facilities for forest research. Of prime importance, also, are the establishment of State and municipal forests, and State legislation providing for fire-prevention, reforestation on private lands, and regulation of methods of cutting.

The general answer to our problem lies in cooperation and organization. And this is a basis for optimism, if we can only wake up to the necessity of action before the time is past; for organization and cooperation are our strong points. We have proved that many times; but we have also proved to be rather easy-going. We have

a tolerant, I'm-minding-my-own-business attitude toward national questions out of which it is proverbially hard to jar us.

The only thing that could arouse us to a realization of the building shortage that grew out of the war and the depletion of the forests was a notice from the landlord to quit. That was a terrible shock, and we don't want any more like it.

We must not let our forests complete their journey. We must not let them "go West" so far that we shall have to depend on other countries for the thousands of useful commodities that come out of the woods.

By-Products

BY MELLA RUSSELL McCALLUM

Illustrated by F. W. Small

ELIZA DUNN was plain and calm—on the outside. Her mother had taught her to be a good housekeeper. Her father had taught her to run a farm profitably. She was a credit to her parents, and they were proud of her; but—of course they did not realize it—they had neglected to train and feed her soul.

Souls are different in their cravings, and in the intensity with which they crave. It seemed as if all the longings that the souls of Eliza's rather stodgy family lacked had been poured into hers. If the dead play jokes, some cultured ancestors must have visited this longing on her in a spirit of irony; for it took the form of a love for the beautiful. And what chance had she to gratify such a passion in a community where people, for the most part, adored ornate golden oak furniture and lithographs in fancy frames; where good music was scoffed at as "highfalutin"; where physical beauty was eyed askance, with a sage "Handsome is as handsome does"?

Eliza had surprised her teachers by an unerring feeling for good literature, music, and pictures. One teacher had gone so far as to approach Amos Dunn with the suggestion that his daughter ought to go away to school. Being on the school board,

Amos settled that teacher in very short order.

Eliza went through the local high school. Then she returned to assist her parents at home, as her sisters had done. In time they expected she would marry. In fact, there was a good man after her hand now—Aaron Hartness, who owned two hundred acres free and clear.

But a girl who craves the beautiful cannot help looking forward to a prince. Eliza would have none of Aaron Hartness and his acres. She did not love him, and she knew that she would never love him; for, besides other things, he was homely, homely, homely.

By the time she was twenty-five she came to a tragic conclusion—that a plain girl in an unimaginative family has small chance of being called upon by a prince. Her parents also came to a conclusion—that Eliza had better take Aaron Hartness, and quickly. There were two younger girls to help at home now. Economically, she was not needed. A young woman should not set herself against the Lord when he sends her a suitable mate.

She would have liked to accommodate her parents; but her soul forbade. Marry a man, without love, whom she could never

love? No, no, no! So she withdrew into herself and cast about for some means of solving the problem of her future. If the prince was not coming, she must do without him. She could teach school, or clerk in a store. She would hate the confinement of either; but it would be better than breaking the faith.

Then sudden-

The Fitzhughs were fine stock. Farmers—but more. Culture and education were associated with the name. That raised them automatically above most of the



SHE ALWAYS LAID A PLACE FOR HIM; BUT SHE DECIDED NOT TO SAY ANYTHING ABOUT IT

ly the prince came—came back, rather. Gerald Fitzhugh had been away to school so many years that Eliza had put him almost out of mind; but not quite. She had never wholly forgotten the handsome blond boy who held his head so high, and went around with a dazed dream in his eyes.

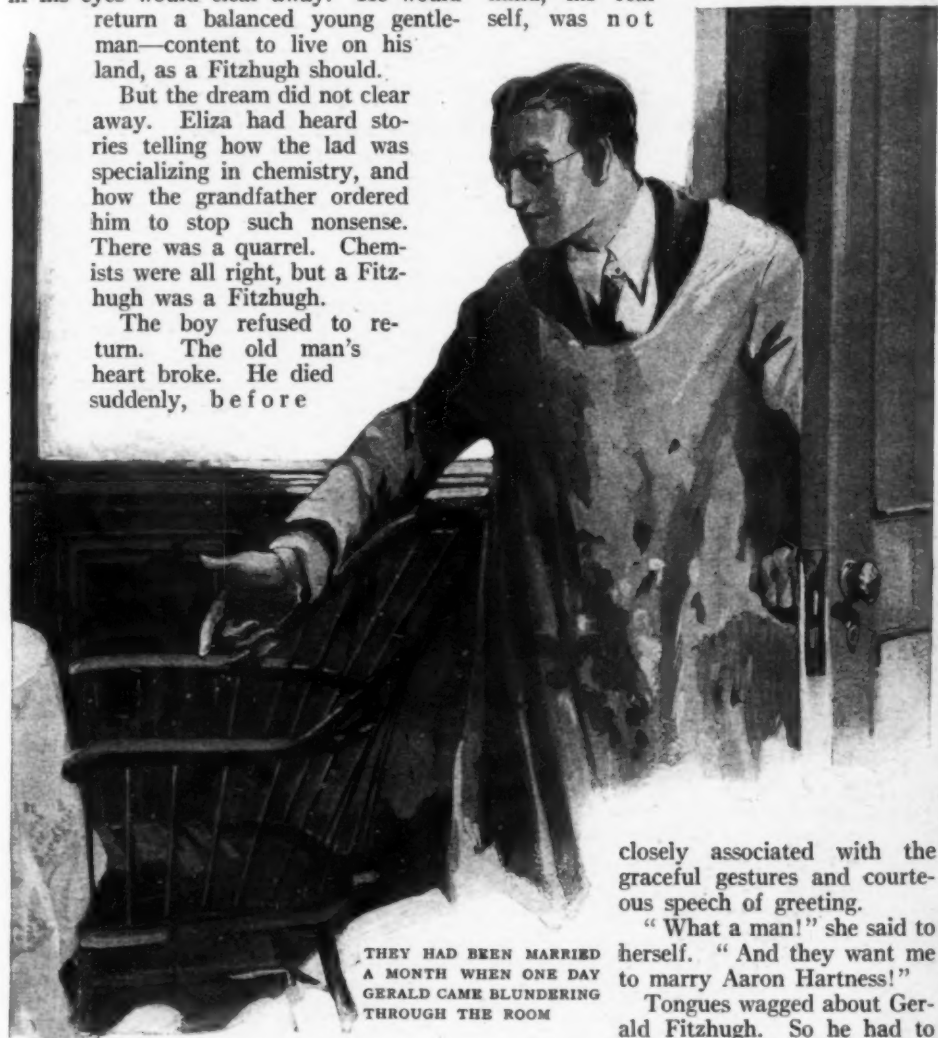
countryside. It was a tradition in the family that the heir, his education acquired, should return to live upon his land. Gerald's parents had died young, and he had been raised by his grandparents. They centered their hopes in him. He was a good scholar, though never a practical one. He studied hard at science, but would not bother much with other things.

They hoped he would outgrow that in college. Out in the world he would develop roundly, they thought, and the dream in his eyes would clear away. He would return a balanced young gentleman—content to live on his land, as a Fitzhugh should.

But the dream did not clear away. Eliza had heard stories telling how the lad was specializing in chemistry, and how the grandfather ordered him to stop such nonsense. There was a quarrel. Chemists were all right, but a Fitzhugh was a Fitzhugh.

The boy refused to return. The old man's heart broke. He died suddenly, before

dreamer; but when he shook hands with his old schoolmate, she saw that there were curious reservations in his gray eyes. His mind, his real self, was not



THEY HAD BEEN MARRIED
A MONTH WHEN ONE DAY
GERALD CAME BLUNDERING
THROUGH THE ROOM

Gerald could get home; and he left a cruel will. He bequeathed the property to Gerald only on condition that he lived on it.

Meanwhile Gerald's grandmother died, too, and now he was back, according to the terms of the will. Eliza saw him at the post-office one day. He was tall, vigorous of body, with a massive head set on fine shoulders. His skin was clear, and his hair, darkened now to bronze, was brushed back crisply. He did not look like a

closely associated with the graceful gestures and courteous speech of greeting.

"What a man!" she said to herself. "And they want me to marry Aaron Hartness!"

Tongues wagged about Gerald Fitzhugh. So he had to swallow his chemistry ambitions after all, they said. Well, it served him right, after disappointing his poor old grandparents.

But as the days went on it became known that he had not swallowed his ambitions. Boxes of strange-looking instruments began to arrive. Moreover, he was not seen about his land. He made no move toward clearing off the weeds. The spring crops were being sowed in a casual manner by a hireling. Jed Murray, the drayman, reported that a laboratory was being fixed

up in the Fitzhugh attic; that the house was full of dust; that the pots and pans were all burned and dirty.

Oh, the heir of the Fitzhughs was a sensation! Disapproval was in the air.

But plain Eliza Dunn understood. She pieced the gossip together, and read the tragedy between the lines. He could never break faith with his science, any more than she could marry Aaron; and his loyal Fitzhugh blood would not allow him to give up the homestead where he and his father and his father's father had been born. Hence the pitiful compromise with weeds and dirt.

II

THE summer progressed. Eliza lived on at home quietly—as far as any one could see. Her family, despairing of marrying her to Aaron, expected that she would take a school in the fall; but she was planning something quite different—something that made the blood flare into her face at unexpected moments.

The stories that seeped out of Fitzhugh Hall became more and more startling. Jed Murray and Mr. Sammis, the storekeeper, said that Gerald seldom came down-stairs from his crazy laboratory any more. He lived on bread and bologna and cheese, all the dishes being soiled long ago, and no fresh ones to use. The weeds were shoulder high. Seth Warren was cheating him out of his crops.

One afternoon in mid August, Eliza called upon Gerald. She had to knock several times with the lovely tarnished knocker before he came. When he appeared, rumpled, unshaven, she knew that under his well-bred "How d'ye do, Eliza?" he was really wondering what the deuce she wanted, and wishing she would go away again.

She sat on the literally ragged edge of a fine old chair, and made her proposition. It sounded calm enough. No one would have dreamed that it had taken months of soul debate.

"I came on business, Gerald. Will you mind if I talk frankly?"

"Certainly not, if you won't scold."

His smile was delightfully boyish.

"You need a housekeeper and a farm manager."

"Heaven knows I do!"

"Well—I need a job. It's the kind of thing I like. I can make your place pay; and I can keep all these beautiful old

things the way they ought to be kept, and cook you nourishing meals. You wouldn't be bothered by details."

He stared at her.

"Oh, come now! Not be bothered by details—that's too good to be true!"

"I mean it."

"But—but the neighborhood. Wouldn't people talk if you went to work for me? I'd hate to have you ostracized. I'd feel to blame."

"Just a minute—I'm coming to that. I've thought it all out. I think it would be best for—for us to marry. I shouldn't bother you any. And—neither would other people, then."

She smoothed her blue gingham skirt with fingers that twitched.

"By Jove, you're an odd person!"

He took a turn about the room, frowning. Then he took another turn.

"Of course, if you—can't possibly consider it—all right; but it isn't so—so terrible. It's just a business matter."

Eliza's color had mounted miserably.

"But I can consider it! There's no woman in my life. I've never thought twice about marriage. When the other boys were talking girl, and getting themselves engaged and—and entangled, I was always thinking of my work. But there's one thing I hope you understand—I should make a rotten husband! And it doesn't seem fair to—well, to cheat a girl out of romance, you know."

"Fair!" Eliza said bitterly. "My people want me to marry a man I detest. If I don't do it, I must either teach school or clerk—which I detest too. So when I saw your beautiful place going to ruin for want of the very thing I know how to give, and would love to give—do you blame me for wanting to take hold of it? It's not a—a question of romance."

He looked suddenly relieved.

"Then—nobody's sentimental," he said.

"Certainly not. I'm hard as rocks, Gerald. The job interests me, that's all." She rose. "Well, you can let me know. I sha'n't be over here again, of course."

He let her out courteously.

"I'll let you know," he said dazedly.

"I confess it's tempting."

The next afternoon he walked over to the Dunn farm. He walked, because the Fitzhugh equipages were all broken and he had neglected to buy an automobile. He was brushed and groomed now, save for the

road dust on his shoes. He made an impressive and an alien figure—the figure of a prince!

"What's that crazy Gerald Fitzhugh want here, I'd like to know?" complained Eliza's mother.

"I think he wants to see me, mother," said Eliza.

They sat in the red chairs on the blue veranda that Amos Dunn was so proud of. Gerald looked wretched. Eliza waited. She wished she could help him; but she had done her part.

"I came over with the intention of asking you to marry me," he began. Eliza appreciated that way of putting it. "But now—oh, I don't know! It seems such a caddish thing to do, to tie up a girl's chances. Why, you might regret it, Eliza!"

"So might you," she told him steadily. "In either case, of course, there are always—the courts. I'm not under any illusions, Gerald."

"That's true—the courts," he muttered, as if the word "courts" had a bad flavor. Suddenly he turned to her. "I wish you'd tell me why you're willing to marry me!"

Again it was nice of him to put it chivalrously. That was the Fitzhugh.

"I did tell you. It's the kind of work I like and can do well—housekeeping and running a farm. And there's another reason. I just love your house, with its lovely lawns—"

"Hardly lovely now!"

"And your old mahogany, and those rugs your uncle brought from China. All my life I've loved them—ever since I used to carry maple sirup to your grandmother. They are my ideals of what one's surroundings ought to be."

"But it seems so strange—so providential—to be free from details. Lord, how they madden me! Cooking, marketing, crops, fences, business letters—oh, do you mean you would really take them all off my hands?"

"Gladly, Gerald!"

"Then—you'll marry me?"

"Yes."

"If it's wrong—God forgive me!"

"Me, too!"

He got up hastily.

"I've got an experiment going, and I must get back. There'll be unavoidable details about the—the wedding, I suppose." He grimaced boyishly.

"Not many. We can drive down to the

justice's some morning. You can be back in your laboratory in an hour."

"By Jove, that's rather simple! Would—would it be too late to-day? Oh, my experiment! I couldn't get married to-day."

"I could meet you to-morrow, say—at the post-office, at ten."

"Good! I can manage that, I think."

He went off, smiling vaguely. Eliza smiled, too; but there was nothing vague about her smile.

"He's so funny," she told herself. "He hasn't a suspicion that any one is in love with him. What a child he is! And what a job for you, Eliza Dunn!"

III

WELL, of course the marriage was a nine days' wonder. Some said that a good, sensible girl like Eliza Dunn must be going mad. Others opined that the Fitzhugh blood had certainly thinned; but the two principals did not hear the gossip. They were too busy. Eliza plunged into her herculean task. Gerald turned over his papers to her, and buried himself in his crooked glass and copper ware. Eliza knew well that tongues were clacking; but she did not care.

Turning chaos to order was easy enough; but there were delicate adjustments to make. For one thing, Eliza did not know what to do about meals. Gerald only came down when he was hungry. Sometimes that happened to be midnight. He did not appear to know that there was such a place as a regular dining-room, and he dished himself vague platefuls of whatever he could find in the kitchen. One time he would make a meal all of meat. Another time he would consume the whole of a large rice pudding; and once she found him carefully buttering a chocolate cake.

She herself ate in the old dining-room, where the light streamed in through the bay window upon the mellow furnishings. She always laid a place for him; but she decided not to say anything about it.

They had been married a month when one day, as she was eating her dinner in the leisurely way she loved—a way not tolerated at Amos Dunn's—Gerald came blundering through the room. He was unkempt, blinking. She had laid out some quaint silver and thin, yellowed china on a piece of sheer old damask. Her blue dress, though gingham, was soft in the pleasant, mellow light. Her brown hair

rippled a little. She did not pull it back as tightly as she used to.

Gerald stopped, arrested.

"Well, by Jove!" he said.

The words seemed to be jarred out of him. He went on through the room. Then, to her surprise, he came back, washed and brushed.

"Is—this my place, across from you?" he asked.

"Yes," she said.

He sat down, and began to eat dreamily.

"Why, the room's all fixed the way grandmother had it," he observed presently. "Flowers and all! How did you know how to do it?"

"I think I've always known. It wasn't any effort, Gerald. I love this room."

"Lord, so do I! I—I'd forgotten. It comes back—grandmother and everything. I was a happy youngster, I guess!" He was looking around reverently. It was the first time he had seemed to be really awake since they had decided to marry. "I dare say you'll be fixing up the other rooms, too," he smiled.

"They've all been in order for two weeks, Gerald."

He stared.

"How extraordinary!" he said. "I didn't notice it."

After a good dinner he actually strolled into the parlor. Eliza, clearing the table, heard him making little sounds of discovery. When he came back he said:

"I think grandmother must sleep more quietly now."

"And your grandfather, too," it was on Eliza's tongue to add, and to tell him how she had discharged dishonest Seth Warren, and hired a trustworthy man who was making the most of the misused crops. Only that morning she had received a good-sized check from a city apple-buyer.

But she held her tongue. She had made up her mind not to thrust a thing upon Gerald. Better that he should discover things for himself, as he had discovered some already. Time enough for him to find out that the financial curve had started upward when he happened to need money for something.

After that he nearly always dined with her—usually abstractedly, it is true; but occasionally in a delightful, boyish mood. It made her very happy.

One day—it was one of the days when he was out of his customary shell—he laid

down his knife and fork and looked at her deliberately.

"I've been thinking," he announced.

"Now your name—Eliza—do you like that name?"

"I can't bear it. It's very ugly. I've always wished that people might name themselves."

"Why not change it to the Italian *Lisa*? I'd like that better."

"I'd like it, too," she said evenly, her heart pounding.

After he had left her she clasped her arms in ecstasy.

"*Lisa—Lisa!*" she whispered; and she never thought of herself by any other name after that.

Still, looking across in the old gilt mirror, some of the ecstasy died. She was plain—and Gerald was so handsome!

"He doesn't hate you—he doesn't mind having you around—but he'll never *care*," she told herself. "And some day he may open his eyes and really see you—he hasn't yet—and then he'll realize how homely you are. It'll be good-by to your silly dream!"

IV

TIME wore on. The days were full, and soul-feeding. Lisa reveled in the beauty and order of the house. Good management gave her leisure to read. She saw little of Gerald. He was working harder than ever.

One day a stout, well-dressed man came to see him, and stayed a long time in the laboratory. She didn't like the man's looks much; but she never dreamed of asking Gerald who he was.

Toward the end of November Gerald got a letter that excited him to the point of stopping his work. He told Lisa that he had to go to the city at once. She immediately thought of the stout, well-dressed man. She began to pack his bag.

"Put in quite a lot of things, please," he said. "I may be gone several days."

For some reason she was troubled. What in the world was Gerald up to? She felt sure that he would be no better than a baby if it was financial business.

"Oh, yes, I'll need some money, too," said Gerald suddenly. "Have we any?"

"There are two hundred dollars in the safe; and there's a check you can cash on your way to the train."

"A check! From whom?"

"From a fruit-dealer, for the apples."

"Do we grow apples?"

Lisa laughed.

"We'll grow more next year, when we spray the trees."

"I see! It's very handy for us, isn't it? Will you feel afraid to stay alone here?"

"Oh, no."

"I'm glad of that."

He banged into his room. She heard evidence of a vigorous toilet. She went on packing.

"Say, Lisa!" He reappeared, glowing. "Have you—any regrets yet?"

"Not yet, Gerald. Have you?"

"I! How could I have? Now that I come to think of it, you make me extremely comfortable—you really do. You don't bother me, and you feed me well, and take care of my things—and now you even take in checks for me! Naturally, I haven't any regrets; but you—now, what do you get out of it?"

"Oh, I like it here," she said. "Remember, sir, I hold the purse-strings!"

It seemed safer to turn it to a joke. He laughed.

It was time for him to go. The hired man was to drive him down. He put on his hat and coat.

"A—a man usually kisses his wife good-by, doesn't he?" he asked uncomfortably, red with embarrassment.

"It's not a bit necessary! Do run along. Ed's waiting. Take care of yourself. Good-by!"

"Good-by, Lisa!"

She stood still and looked out through one of the narrow windows that flanked the door. Again she clasped her arms, but not in ecstasy. There was an ache in her heart. Suppose her prince should wake up in the city—in a brightly lighted city street, thronged with pretty women, or in a gay restaurant, where eyes and shoulders gleamed! What chance had she, with no claim to beauty but an adopted name and adopted surroundings? Her heart was afraid. No matter if she had done wonders for Gerald's place—fed him—saved him worry. When a man really *sees* a beautiful woman—

Gerald climbed into the buggy, looked back, and waved. She waved back. Then she flew up to her room, and flung herself on the bed.

She looked plainer than ever, of course, when she stopped crying; but she felt better. She bathed her face and smoothed

her hair, and pulled it out a little at the sides, like magazine ladies.

She was just thinking that she would go down and make herself a cup of tea, and drink it from one of the thin blue cups, when the front door banged open, and some one raced up-stairs. Gerald! She hurried out into the upper hall.

"There's another train in two hours! Hurry and get ready—I want you to go, too! I just happened to think that it will be a vacation for you."

"Oh, I can't, Gerald! It's good of you to come back, but—"

"Can't Ed look after things here?"

"Yes, but—"

"But I want you to come, Lisa!"

The blood receded from her face.

"Why?"

"Because it's only right that you should. You'll enjoy it, I think. Grandmother used to go on regular shopping orgies. Women like that sort of thing, don't they?"

"Yes—but I've no decent clothes."

"Who'll look at you?"

She resented that. Of course *he* wouldn't look at her!

"Do hurry, Lisa!"

"Well, all right—I'll go!"

V

SHE was glad they could not get a Pullman reservation. She was acutely conscious of her appearance. As a matter of fact, it wasn't so bad as she imagined. She did her hair quite prettily now, and her sallowness was disappearing, since she no longer ate of the greasy fried foods that prevailed at her father's.

Gerald was a revelation on the train. He talked to her about his work for the first time. He explained that he had had an offer for a discovery he had just made. It was a synthetic substitute for rubber. Lisa was dumfounded.

"Why, you aren't nearly so unpractical as I thought, Gerald," she said. "You'll be making money. But—dear me, I wonder—don't you think you ought to have a lawyer? How do you know this Mr. Lerner isn't going to steal your process?"

"By Jove, maybe you're right! That's an idea, Lisa! My grandfather used to employ a law firm—Birks & Birks—conservative fellows. I'll look them up. Lucky you're along, maybe!"

Lisa thought so, too.

"It's queer about this process," he went



LISA WAS IMMENSELY PLEASED; BUT IT FRIGHTENED HER, THEIR NEW IMPORTANCE

on. "I was after something else. This was a by-product. I nearly threw it away."

"What's a by-product?" Lisa inquired.

"Something that you get on the side, when you're after something else. Broth might be called a by-product of boiled meat. You couldn't get boiled meat without making broth, could you? By-products are always fooling chemists. Sometimes they turn out to be so important."

It was a four-hour trip. Gerald talked animatedly all the time. They got in late. To Lisa's dismay, they were whirled in a taxicab to a large hotel. She protested for a quieter place.

"Oh, we've always put up here," Gerald said, and that settled it.

He strolled unconcernedly up the lobby

behind the buttoned boy; but she was thinking of her village clothes.

The next morning Gerald awoke with a headache—a rare but serious occurrence. There could be no business done that morning. Lisa called up Mr. Lerner and made the appointment for the next morning. She also called the firm of lawyers Gerald had mentioned. Then, because Gerald could not bear any one about at such a time, and there was nothing she could do for him, she went out into the street.

Gerald had said that the hotel was in the heart of a good shopping section. It was true. Lisa walked along dazedly. Well-dressed women seemed to be spring-

ing up everywhere, getting out of motor-cars, tripping along in smart shoes. She noticed what confidence they had, and what unconsciousness.

An hour later she was still walking about, still *outside* the shops; but she was not nearly so dazed. She was thinking hard. Many of these attractive women were not pretty, or even good-looking. It was their perfect grooming and gowning that turned the trick; that made them attractive.

Her heart quickened with excitement. She was standing outside a large shop which she had heard praised for its business integrity. She had plenty of money with her. They had cashed the apple check at Mr. Sammis's store.

She went inside and approached a god with a gardenia. At first she spoke haltingly. Then, as his face still remained invitingly mask-like, she told him exactly what she wanted.

"I live in a little town," she said. "I know my clothes aren't right, but I don't know what's the matter with them. I want to get a new outfit."

"We shall be happy to assist *madame*," he assured her. "I understand."

He scribbled something on a card, called a girl, and told the girl to take *madame* to Miss Claire.

At sight of Miss Claire, Lisa's heart sank. She braced herself for indifference, scorn, ridicule; but Miss Claire was an artist in more ways than one. It was her business to understand the Lisas of the world. They whisked from lingerie to suits—to millinery—to shoes—to hosiery—to hair-dressing. It was delightful.

Two hours later a new Lisa emerged from a dressing-room. She was trembling; but the lady in the mirror told her there was nothing to tremble about. The lady in the mirror was smart, all in dark blue, with a little velvet hat, and skirts of the proper shortness above silken ankles and unbelievable French heels. Not *too* smart—just right, Miss Claire said; and Miss Claire knew!

Lisa made her way outdoors again. A clock somewhere boomed one. She must get back to the hotel.

The mirrors in the hotel corridors repeated the same smart lady. It was true! Eliza Dunn, indeed, thought Lisa. Eliza Dunn was dead and buried now; but Gerald—what would he say? That was the real question.

She went into her room lightly, crossed it, and tapped on Gerald's door. He answered brightly:

"Come in! I'm all right now."

He was dressed and smoking. A disordered tray told of breakfast—a good sign.

"I'm so glad you're well again," she said, going fully in.

"Too bad we postponed that business till to-morrow. We could just as well get it done this afternoon and start back home. You called Birks & Birks, didn't you? Strange that I never thought of having them!"

He was unaware of any change about her. She felt the desire to scream at him—to make him see.

"What in the world shall we do with our time?" he fretted. "I suppose you've had your lunch."

"No. I've—been in a shop."

"That's right. I thought you could amuse yourself. Well, we may as well get something to eat. Would you like to lunch here in our rooms?"

"No, please. Let's go out somewhere. And then—couldn't we go to a theater? I saw some women buying *matinée* tickets at the hotel desk."

"Good idea! It will pass the time." He got up and brushed his hair automatically. "What sort of a show do you want to see?"

"Anything—so long as it's good, I mean. I've never been to the theater much."

They went down-stairs, purchased the tickets, then out on the street. In the next block Gerald stopped before a white-tiled lunch-room.

"Would you like to lunch here?" he inquired, although he looked a little dubious himself.

She understood the move. He wanted to save her embarrassment. Last night she had protested against the grandeur of the hotel. It was kind of him; but last night was a thousand years away.

"No, not here," she said. "See that sign over there—'The Red Rose'? I'd like to lunch there."

"But that's a fashionable place."

"I know it."

He shrugged quizzically as they crossed the street.

Two girls sat at the table next them—two golden girls, with youth and beauty and the trappings of wealth. One was dark

and one fair, and both were exquisite. Lisa drank in their perfection thirstily. Beauty—she would never get her fill of it!

Then suddenly a little chill came to her heart. The thought sprang up that no matter how exquisitely she might dress and groom herself, she could never be like those girls of twenty. Grooming couldn't create youth—only an illusion of youth.

Gerald saw the girls, too, in his absent way.

"Aren't they lovely young things?" she whispered to him.

"Dolls," he said. "Pretty dolls."

His gray eyes returned to her with pleasant abstraction.

"Oh, I'd give anything if I could look that way, Gerald!"

"You—with your common sense?"

"A woman gets tired of having common sense."

His eyes lost a trifle of their vagueness.

"I shouldn't worry about that. You're worth a dozen of them, you know. And I'm sure you look quite all right, too. Come, we must get on to the theater."

"I'm sure you look quite all right"—so that was her reward! That was the pay for the feverish morning! It was kind, it was courteous—but it wasn't what she wanted at all. He simply did not see. She sighed.

The play was a good, inconsequential comedy. Lisa loved it. She noticed that Gerald seemed to enjoy it, too. The setting—a living-room in a Long Island country house—gave her a dozen ideas to use at home; and the star—a plain woman of great charm—gave her hope again.

"That wasn't bad sport, was it?" said Gerald, as they came out.

"I just adored it," breathed Lisa.

She was walking with winged feet. Her soul seemed away off somewhere in a cloud of romance. Yet there was a pleasant, earthy consciousness, too, as they mingled with the other *matinée* people; for no longer was she outside the gay, good-looking throng. She was one of them!

They walked along the living, lighted street.

"Oh, I'm having such a good time, Gerald," she said.

He smiled indulgently.

"I thought you would. Grandmother used to like it."

"Do you enjoy it, too?"

"Why, yes, under the circumstances.

Of course I'd rather have started for home; but—yes, I rather enjoy it."

After a while she said:

"I spent quite a lot of money this morning."

"Yes? Presents for the home folks? That's good."

"No—things for myself—clothes."

"That's better yet. I'm glad of it. Get some more to-morrow, if there's time."

It sounded like a parent who wants a child to have what it wants, but can't be bothered with the details.

"Oh, Gerald, I wish—"

"That we were rich, and you could spend still more yet?" He chuckled.

"No, no—how silly! Let's have dinner at some real gay place, Gerald."

They faced each other across a narrow, intimate table.

"Your hair looks different," said Gerald. "It used to droop more."

"Does it look—better?"

"I'm afraid I'm not a judge. It looks all right, I guess."

That was all he said. That was the end of the day's campaign. The new trappings he did not see at all.

VI

NEXT morning something more important than clothes occupied Lisa. At ten o'clock they were ushered into Mr. Lerner's luxurious offices. Lisa recognized him, and felt the same dislike again. Birks & Birks had sent a junior partner, a little chap named Waller.

Mr. Lerner beamed; but Mr. Waller seemed to be looking for trouble. A lengthy contract was produced. It was a wonderful document, and promised wonders for Gerald's discovery; but Mr. Waller advised Gerald not to sign it.

Gerald was annoyed. So was Lisa herself. There seemed no need of Mr. Waller's being so unpleasant and nosy; but she recalled that Gerald's grandfather had employed this firm, and Gerald's grandfather had been a pretty wise old gentleman. She decided to stick by Mr. Waller.

There was some argument. Mr. Lerner puffed, and stopped beaming. Gerald looked rather huffy. Lisa was afraid he would sign in spite of Mr. Waller.

"Let's wait, Gerald," she whispered.

At half past eleven they were out on the street again.

"If you'll come over to our office I can

show you a catch in the contract, Mr. Fitzhugh," said Mr. Waller.

Gerald complied, reluctantly. It was only two blocks away.

"It's a fraud to get your formula for a song," explained Mr. Waller as they walked along.

"I'd rather take a song for it than be bothered this way. I've got to get back to my laboratory," Gerald answered.

"I don't imagine Mrs. Fitzhugh holds quite that view," replied the lawyer, smiling.

They remained with Birks & Birks two hours. Gerald was finally convinced of Lerner's intended fraud. He was also convinced that it would be better to sell on a royalty basis. Keen old John Birks, his grandfather's friend, conducted the conference. He also arranged for a new appointment for Gerald, at four that afternoon, with the head of a great chemical concern.

Lisa was immensely pleased; but it frightened her, their new importance. They went into a restaurant afterward, to refresh themselves before the next ordeal.

"This business part is a nuisance, isn't it?" asked Gerald. "Still, I'm glad you mentioned a lawyer. I'll leave such matters to you entirely after this."

"I wonder if any more of our by-products will turn out so important!" mused Lisa.

She was thinking—she was always thinking of it subconsciously—of their marriage.

"Never can tell; they might."

"I don't mean just chemistry."

"Oh!" He was no further interested in that.

At the Barry Cramer Company, Lisa was again frightened and impressed. There was not the showiness here of Mr. Lerner's offices. An air of almost noiseless efficiency prevailed. Through glass partitions—the place was largely glass—she could see men in white coats fussing with instruments like Gerald's.

The elder Mr. Birks and Mr. Waller were there, and several Barry Cramer officials, including the president. Then they called in some men with white coats on, who shook Gerald's hand respectfully—almost reverently.

At half past five a short contract was signed. Lisa understood the terms perfectly this time. There was more handshak-

ing. Gerald's face was burning; so was hers. Some one invited them to dinner, which they declined—she didn't know why, unless it was that they wanted to run away from their importance. It was becoming oppressive.

Back in the hotel, Gerald flung off his coat and hat.

"Thank the Lord, it's over! Now I can breathe—and get back to work. Leave your door open, Lisa—I'm nervous as a cat!"

She was nervous as a cat, too. She sat down and put her hands on her flaming cheeks.

"You'll be rich," she said. "I can't believe it!"

"Your credit, Lisa. And don't say 'you.' Say 'we.'"

"Are you happy about it?"

"Oh, I don't know. It's rather a bore; but it will relieve you a lot, I fancy. You can get a housekeeper and a farm superintendent now."

"But personally, Gerald! Don't you care for the money?"

"Why, no. It would be deucedly inconvenient not to have any, of course. I must look up our train! There ought to be one that will let me get to my laboratory by morning."

That sobered Lisa. She was disappointed. She herself was in no hurry to go. She had hoped for another theater, for more little gleaming dinner-tables; but already Gerald was back among his crooked glass and copper ware.

What a fool she was to dream of waking him! Not even the prospect of wealth touched him. She was baffled, discouraged.

"Will your future discoveries be salable, too?" she asked.

"I dare say; but see here! Don't you let them drag me down here much! You're the business manager, you know."

"Am I, really?"

"Yes. Now that I come to think of it, you're quite a remarkable business person. Quite remarkable!" The idea seemed to please him.

It pleased her, too. It was a sincere tribute, even if it wasn't what she wanted. Did all women get their rewards that way? By-products—by-products!

"Well, I warn you, Gerald, if I'm to be business manager, I shall spend a lot of money!"

It wasn't at all what she wanted to say.

There was a touch of recklessness in her laugh.

"Hope you do." His voice came from behind the mazes of a time-table. "Sure, spend money—shopping trips—theaters—anything! Only don't drag me into them. By Jove, here's a train in an hour! Can we make it?"

He sprang to his feet. She stood still.

"Gerald—can't we stay a few days longer?"

He stared at her.

"What—here? In this hotel?"

"Yes—please! It's all so new to me—so gay! The shops and the restaurants—the life, Gerald! I can't bear to leave it just yet!"

He was silent, evidently trying to be fair. From the street the city noises drifted in—a big, musical chime in a tall tower; street-car gongs, motor horns, the traffic whistle, punctuating the murmurous undertone—all calling to Lisa! Oh, it seemed as if she must keep Gerald there—where people really lived—a little longer! Back at Fitzhugh Hall he would bury himself again—would never see her—the real her, the woman.

"I don't want to be unreasonable," he said slowly, judicially—and very kindly. "There's no good reason, I suppose, why we can't stay, if you want to."

"But doesn't it appeal to you, just a little?"

"Oh, I've enjoyed it—yes; but now that I come to think of it, what restaurant is there that can compare with our dining-room at home—with the flowers in the bay window—and those white curtains of yours—by Jove, really white, too!" He glanced at the grayish draperies of the huge hotel windows, indifferently hung by hireling hands. "I like a white curtain *white*, Lisa!"

She drew a sharp breath of amazement.

"You see, it's your own fault, I guess."

He smiled. "You've made Fitzhugh Hall attractive again. I didn't really appreciate it when grandmother kept it, I can see now. I was just a boy; but now that you've regenerated it from the mess I had it in—oh, I confess, I didn't see what you were doing at first, not till—well, recently. This barn of a room has driven it home."

"Why, *Gerald*—"

"But I'm willing to stay! You deserve a longer play-time—more shopping. I don't blame you. That dress you're wearing, now—it's pretty—fits you. I don't blame you for wanting to get more like it. But—it's funny—those blue cotton things you wear at home—I like them on you—those short-sleeved affairs, that show your arms."

The breath of amazement had grown to a lump in Lisa's throat, a sob. Now it broke, and went a thousand inarticulate ways. Without a word—she couldn't have spoken—she started to pack up their things. The voices of the city—what were they to her? The gleam had changed.

Gerald misunderstood. He strode over and stayed the hands that were folding garments so frantically.

"My dear girl, I assure you, I am perfectly willing to stay!"

She shook her head.

"No—I've changed my mind! I want to go home!"

He stood irresolute, baffled; but only for an instant. The mysteries of woman psychology—she thanked Heaven for that—were not for Gerald to ponder over.

"Ah, that's it, Lisa!" His voice breathed relief—and more. For the first time they looked at each other with something akin to understanding. "That's it—we'll go *home*!"

THE STREAM

I MUST follow the stream that leads
Through the marshes and through the meads.

It, like mine, has a rover soul
In the depths and over the shoal;

Dimpling, and then darting far
Under the sun and under the star.

Now 'mid peace and now 'mid strife,
I must follow the stream of life!

Clinton Scollard



EBB AND FLOW

DESOLATE, wind-swept marshes, scarred across
By sluggish streams that onward slowly glide;
A sea-bird's wail from off the dim horizon—
And joy goes drifting out
On the ebbing tide.

Dawn burns the dreary marsh with red delight,
While sun-lapped waves come leaping side by side
To clothe it with a sheet of living flame—
And joy comes riding in
On the flowing tide!

Lorna Keeling Collard

Painting in the Air

THE INTERESTING WORK OF A. E. COOPER, AN ENGLISH ARTIST WHO DURING THE WAR WAS AN OFFICER IN THE ROYAL AIR FORCE, AND WHO HAS FOUND A NEW PERSPECTIVE FOR THE LANDSCAPE-PAINTER

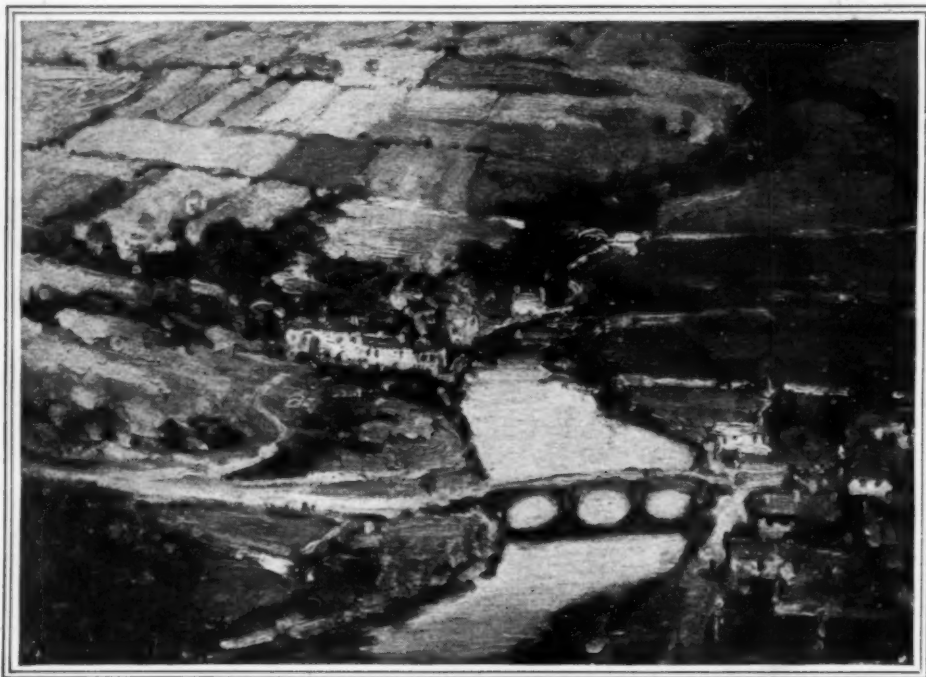
By Reginald Pound

IT was an inevitable, though perhaps somewhat belated, consequence of man's mastery of the air that artists should perceive in flying a means of presenting their pictures in an altogether novel perspective. A leader in this new field is Captain A. E. Cooper, official artist to the British air-ship service during the war, who was probably the first man actually to paint pictures in the air.

It may be well to emphasize this latter

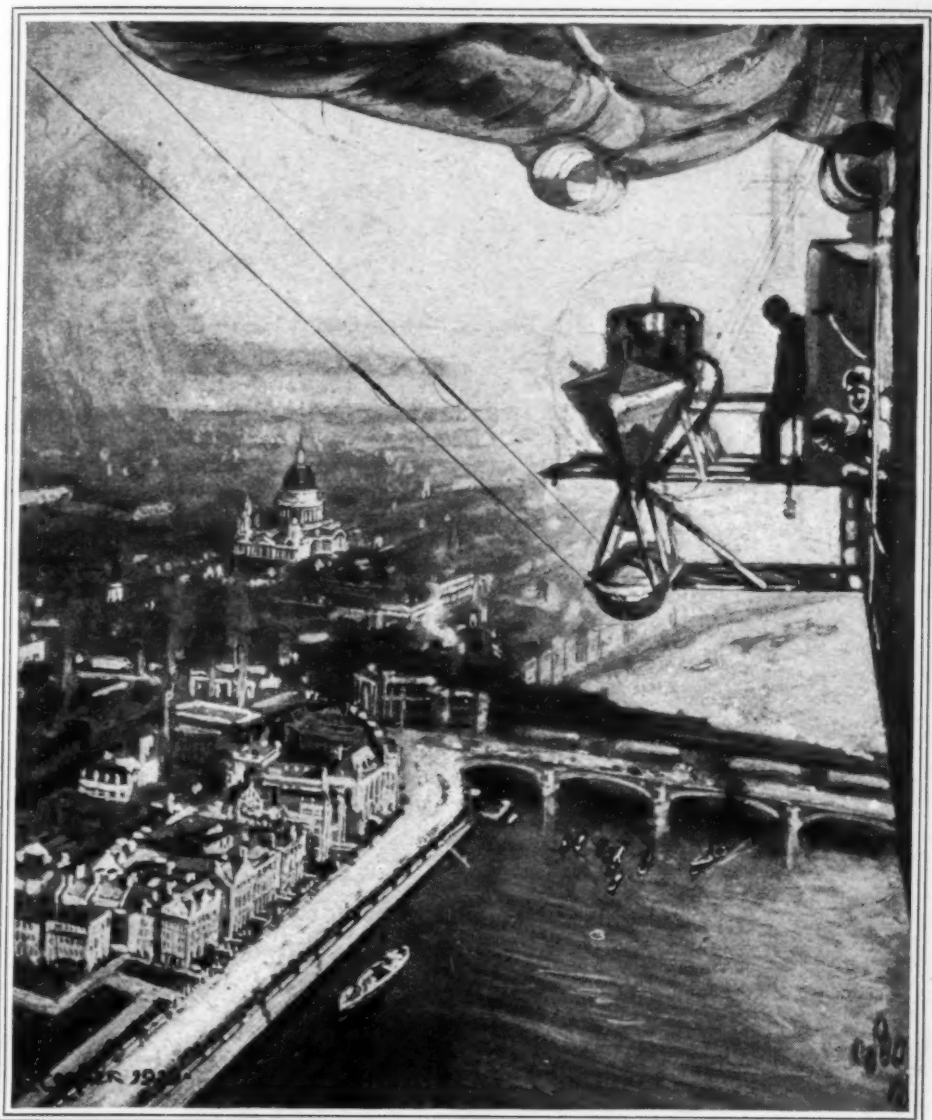
point, for many artists have pictured flying subjects from the earth. Captain Cooper has mounted into the skies with canvas and palet and brushes, and there, perched perilously on the roof of the after-car of an air-ship, has painted, with astonishing success, the earth below as he has seen it in its ever-varying forms.

Any one who has flown will agree that in making pictures of the earth as seen from above, Captain Cooper has touched



VIEW OF HADDINGTON, SCOTLAND, AND THE RIVER TYNE, PAINTED FROM AN AIR-SHIP AT A HEIGHT OF ABOUT EIGHT HUNDRED FEET

From a painting by A. E. Cooper



"THE HEART OF LONDON," A PAINTING WHICH WAS HUNG "ON THE LINE" AT LAST YEAR'S ROYAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION—ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL APPEARS IN THE LEFT CENTER; ON THE RIGHT IS BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE

Painted from an air-ship by A. E. Cooper

no more than the fringe of a subject which contains enormous possibilities for the artist. Yet the other day a famous British Royal Academician expressed, in my hearing, the opinion that these possibilities must inevitably be quickly exhausted. His reason was that the view of the earth from the air is too monotonous; that a sense of boredom must soon possess one as a result

of looking continuously down on the landscape below.

Such a suggestion contains an element of truth when it refers to air travel at high altitudes—say five thousand feet or more; but from below that height, and especially between five hundred and fifteen hundred feet, it is quite a different story, as Captain Cooper's pictures sufficiently demonstrate.



A LARGE BRITISH AIR-SHIP, R 26, FLYING ABOVE THE LEVEL LANDSCAPE OF NORFOLK

From a painting by A. E. Cooper

No man with a grain of imagination could ever be bored by the magnificent picture presented by the earth lying a thousand feet or so below, like a vast carpet stretching away into infinity.

Thus seen, the landscape has countless disguises, each of them containing the elements of a splendid picture, with unlimited color possibilities for the artist. It is impossible to gaze down without marveling at the rich beauty of the scene, and at the uncanny skill with which nature combines the whole into an indescribable and yet harmonious color-scheme. It is as if one floated over a gigantic map overlaid with straight white lines—some taut and others seemingly slack—which in reality are roads; with silver threads that are rivers and streams, and thinner threads that are railroads. Here and there are curiously blurred patches that stand for trees and woods, and tiny red and brown mosaics that represent buildings. And with it all one has a sense of freedom, of isolation, that must be stimulating to the mind of even the most unimaginative of mortals.

Captain Cooper has found that this feeling of isolation, which comes of being for a while sundered from earthly limitations, as it were, acts like a powerful tonic on the creative faculties. He told me, however, that he did not come to this point all at once. He took up his painting-materials on his very first flight, but was so amazed at the richness of the panorama which slowly unfolded itself that he could do nothing but look down in wonderment at what he saw. In a little while, however, his artist's mind and eyes were able to cope with the situation, so to speak. He soon found himself keenly discriminating between the useful and the useless material in the tremendous vista, and getting to actual work.

Six months at the great air-ship base at East Fortune, in Scotland, provided him with unique opportunities to pursue his art. Such picturesque bits of Scotland as Edinburgh Castle, Stirling, Montrose, Had-

dington, and Loch Lomond, hitherto painted only from the conventional view-point, gave him fine material for pictures. So, too, did the North Sea in its varying moods, and many places on the Continent came under the spell of his brush, with what fruitful results was seen at an exhibition which he recently held in London.

One of his flights over the British metropolis yielded a striking picture of the heart of London as seen from an air-ship, which was hung "on the line" at the Royal Academy last summer—a fact which may be interpreted as a sign that that time-honored institution is not so conservative as to ignore the possibilities arising out of a combination of art and aviation.

And in this connection there can be no doubt that those responsible for art exhibitions in the future will have to find wall-space for many of these aerial paintings, for we shall surely have our artists of the sky as we have long had those of the countryside and the sea.

It will not suffice for the artist of the air to produce theoretical studies of the earth as seen from aloft. He must fly, and must paint while flying, if he would thoroughly understand and truthfully interpret the new and ever-changing world that presents itself to the aviator's eye. Besides possessing the faculty of working quickly, and the power of projecting his whole mind upon his task, he must be a master of color, and should also possess a genius, akin to Turner's, for suggesting illimitable distances. Turner would have been the supreme aerial artist.

As to the kind of craft most suitable for the purpose, the air-ship easily outclasses the airplane. Captain Cooper told the writer that he found the N. S. (North Sea) type of air-ship—commonly called a "blimp"—the best for the work. The airplane, he says, is too speedy and too unsteady. He speaks from experience, for he has spent about three hundred hours actually at work with his brushes while flying above the earth.

THE STRANDED MARINER

Oh, ships go east and ships go west,
And ships go sailing by;
But where's my argosy of dreams,
With spars that touch the sky?

Walter M. Danburg

Who's Who and Why

BY E. K. MEANS

Illustrated by E. J. Dinsmore

SKEETER BUTTS was lamenting the loss of an opportunity to acquire great wealth.

"I don't see how come I let dat chance git by me," he mourned, as he gazed with envious eyes at a man who stood in front of the Henscratch Saloon beside a little picture-taking machine.

On nearly any Saturday afternoon in the South, when the negroes from the plantations come to town, such a man can be seen where the colored folks congregate, operating a little barrel-shaped camera.

"He collecks fifty cents fer each koodak," Skeeter sighed. "Ef two thousand niggers in Tickfall have deir mugs snap-shooted, an' all de coons on de plantations come to town to look at de little bird in de camera—dat man will git so rich de white folks will hold him up an' rob him!"

When he could keep silent no longer, he mentioned this fact to the photographer.

"De real money ain't in his bizness," Stogie said. "Atter I buys de fillums an' sends de negatives to N'Awleens to git 'em devil-upped, I suttinly ain't make many dollars. Ef you wants to git rich, I kin fix up a plan so we kin make so many dollars we cain't count de dough!"

"When a nigger gits dat prosperitious, he most in gin'ral has to dodge de jail-house," Skeeter protested.

"Dar ain't no danger in dis," Stogie replied. "It's jes' a kind of friendly swindle to make a killin' amongst niggers. De cote-house ain't no kin to de corpse."

"Whut you aimin' to do?" Skeeter asked.

"De plan am dis," Stogie replied. "We kin print a book wid a picture an' sketch of de life of all de leadin' cullud citizens in town."

"Who am de leadin' cullud citizens?" Skeeter asked.

"Eve'y nigger who is got money enough to pay fer his picture an' his life history is a leadin' citizen."

"Who's gwine write dem life histories?" Skeeter asked.

"De most literish man of our race in dis town is Revun Vinegar Atts. We'll give Vinegar two bits to write each obscribe. Of co'se de niggers kin furnish de facks demselves."

"Who publishes dis here nigger herd-book?" Skeeter asked eagerly.

"I knows a little job-printin' house in N'Awleens whut prints all de fun'ral notices an' de weddin' 'nouncements, an' dey prints a little nigger chu'ch paper. Dey could print our book fer us."

"How much do it cost?" Skeeter asked, his eyes gleaming with interest.

"Five dollars fer his picture in de book per each, an' five dollars fer de sketch of his life per each. Dat's about whut it will cost to print 'em. We'll charge each man fifteen dollars, an' dat will give us five dollars fer our trouble."

"Is you ever tried dis thing on befo'?" Skeeter asked.

"Naw. It's plumb new, but I'm shore it will make a big hit. Eve'y nigger in de book will tote his nose as high as a giraffe."

Skeeter took a piece of paper and a stub pencil from his pocket, and began to draw figures laboriously. He estimated that one thousand people would invest in the book, which meant that they would have to handle no less than fifteen thousand dollars.

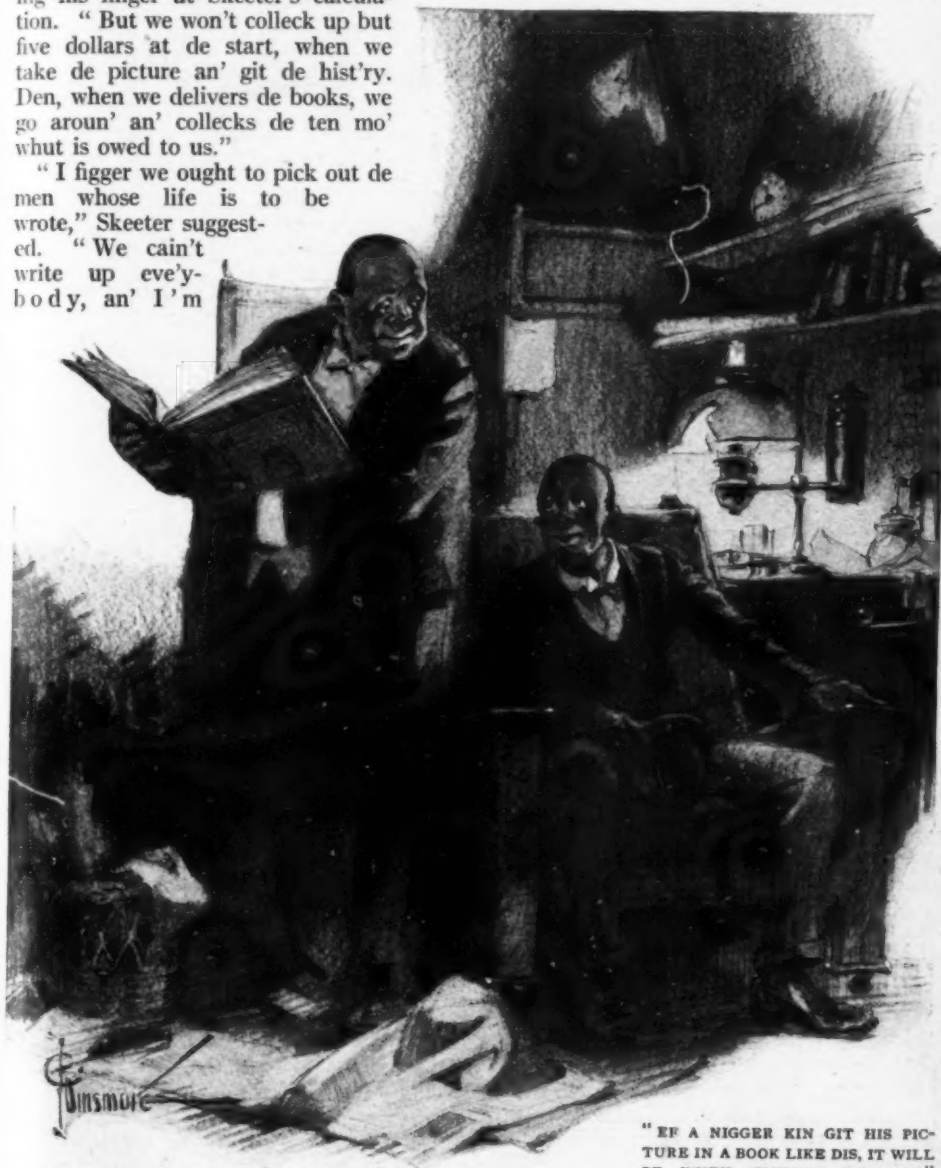
Skeeter had an appreciation of the attractiveness of this proposition which is probably denied to those who are more familiar with books and papers and printer's ink. To the negro of rudimentary education, to see his name in the newspaper or in a book is to achieve immortality. To many of them, merely to get a circular addressed to them from the post-office conveys a

pleasure utterly beyond our ability to grasp.

"Dat's de money we got to handle befo' dis bizness is over," Stogie declared, pointing his finger at Skeeter's calculation. "But we won't colleck up but five dollars 'at de start, when we take de picture an' git de hist'ry. Den, when we delivers de books, we go aroun' an' collecks de ten mo' whut is owed to us."

"I figger we ought to pick out de men whose life is to be wrote," Skeeter suggested. "We cain't write up eve'y-body, an' I'm

Dat will be de ancient history part of our book. Den we will git Hitch Diamond, de prize-fighter, an' Vinegar Atts, de preacher. Atter dat, de record will go down through



"EF A NIGGER KIN GIT HIS PICTURE IN A BOOK LIKE DIS, IT WILL BE WUTH FIFTEEN DOLLARS"

skeart we might git somebody in de book dat will spile its looks."

"De fust picture in de book ought to be yourn," Stogie suggested. "You is de last leadin' saloon-keeper of Tickfall. You is a has-been, an' yo' saloon is a use-to-wus.

de littler fellers an' take in de little cullud planters, until it plays out to nothin' but a bunch of coons who is got fifteen dollars an' no life history wuth writin' up."

"Whut about de lady folks?" Skeeter asked.

"Suttinly," Stogie replied. "We'd have a turrible row ef we lef' 'em out. We got to give 'em a showy place in de book, too."

"De only way fer us to do," Skeeter said after a moment's thought, "is to sand-squich de women amongst de men—have a man an' a woman an' a man an' a woman through de whole book."

"You have done learned how de cullud lady folks likes it done," Stogie said with a smile of appreciation.

"I'm de mattermony advicer in dis town, an' I'm on to some things," Skeeter said with a laugh. "I'll git dis bizness started to-night!"

II

AMONG a number of books discarded from the library of Colonel Gaitskill was a biographical history of Louisiana. This ponderous book was now the largest volume in the diminutive library of Vinegar Atts. It was beautifully bound, and contained page-size portraits of certain alleged prominent citizens, accompanied by the history of their lives.

When Skeeter Butts first mentioned his ingenious plan to Vinegar, the colored clergyman brought down this volume from his book-shelf.

"I ketches on," Vinegar said heartily. "I highly favors de plan. Ef a nigger kin git his picture in a book like dis, it will be wuth fifteen dollars."

"Kin you write de life story of all dese here men?" Skeeter asked.

"Ef dey gives me de facks, I kin," Vinegar said. "I's had a heap of practise on preachin' fun'rals, makin' a dead nigger out a pretty good darky when all de facks in de case wus ag'in' him. Truth ain't in style at no fun'ral. I think I kin fix up a pretty good boost fer all of 'em. How much does I git paid fer each obituary?"

"We pays two bits per each," Skeeter grinned. "You kin colleck de two bits when de sucker gives you de facks."

"Two bits from one thousan' blackies!" Vinegar Atts exclaimed. "Dat is two hundred an' fifty dollars in dis nigger's pocket, an' a chance to git de inside hist'ry an' look at de fambly skeletons of eve'y coon in town!"

That evening, at the Nights of Darkness Lodge, the biographical history of Louisiana was exhibited as a sample of a kind of book which was to record the life history of the colored citizens of Tickfall. The

members of the lodge walked up to the table and solemnly examined it. Some of them could not read, but all of them took a good look at the pictures.

"I think Skeeter ought to take our names an' money right now," Pap Curtain announced. "Dis am a good time fer de members of de lodge to git in dis new book."

"All you got to do is to lay five dollars on dis here table an' gimme yo' name," Skeeter announced. "Den go up to Vinegar Atts an' tell him de sad tale of yo' life, an' he'll write you up. Atter dat you won't have nothin' to do but wuck an' save up de ten dollars you'll have to pay when de book is delivered."

Every man in the lodge came forward and gave his name and his money. In the midst of this, Figger Bush called Vinegar Atts off to one side.

"Dis here book is a good thing, Vinegar," he said earnestly, "an' I ain't aimin' to start no doubts to bust up yo' bizness; but I ain't gwine in on it."

"What's de reason why?" Vinegar asked.

"Us poor shines gits in a heap of trouble wid de jail-house," Figger explained. "We ain't bad men, but we is powerful onlucky in monkeyin' wid de law. Dis here book looks too much like a reward bill to suit me!"

Vinegar understood at once, for he had seen criminals advertised by handbills containing a cut of the negro and his personal description.

"Dis ain't no rogues' gallery like dey have in de pen'tench'ry," Vinegar explained. "Dis is a book. A man kin buy it, take it home, an' hide it."

"I see!" Figger replied after a moment's thought. "Dis is a secret lodge wuck. Ef nobody gits a book, excusin' de feller whose picture is in it, I guess dat would be all right an' puffleckly safe. I hope so; but I got a notion we is fixin' to have trouble along dat line."

"Don't say nothin' about dat, Figger," Vinegar urged. "I'll fix dat all right so us poor blacks won't git in no danger or have no trouble."

When the lodge adjourned, Skeeter said to Vinegar:

"De way to handle dis job is through de diffunt sawcieties. We'll git de names of de members of our lodge, den go to de members of de Nigger Uplift, an' den make

our propersition to de members of de Shooly church. By dis arrangement, we'll be suze to git de leadin' members of de best organizations in our town."

"Dat's right," Vinegar agreed. "Our lodge is got only men members, while de Uplift is mostly women members. My church is got bofe; so we'll split about even amongst de men and de women."

III

FOR the next two weeks there were three busy men in Tickfall. Stogie was taking pictures, collecting fifty cents before he would let any man or woman stand before his camera. Skeeter Butts extracted five dollars from each of the candidates for immortality, and for his trouble in soliciting the money and depositing it in the bank he kept fifty cents for himself. Vinegar Atts wrote biographies. He insisted that no sketch should be more than one hundred words in length, and he was so rushed by applications that he had to employ several school-teachers who wrote a legible hand to help him in the compositions. He collected twenty-five cents from a number of victims, and then went on strike.

"I don't write no mo' of dese here fairy tales fer two bits, Skeeter!" Vinegar said, as he gathered up a handful of blank sheets, put them in his desk, and closed the top. "I got one of dese here fertile inventors in my mind—got to hab, so I kin preach a good fun'ral disco'se—an' I got a conscience as stretchy as a fat woman's gyarter; but I ain't writin' no mo' two-bit lies fer nobody!"

"Dat looks like good pay to me," Skeeter murmured.

"Tain't good pay!" Vinegar bawled. "I takes down de facks an' expresses 'em in good English, an' dis here teacher copies 'em off fer me, an' I don't git but twenty-five cents per each. You an' Stogie collects four bits from each nigger fer yo' wuck an' don't have half as much trouble as me."

"You done made yo' trade," Skeeter said. "Tain't fair to stop on us jes' when we got our bizness good started."

"I ain't stoppin'," Vinegar explained. "I's jes' takin' a vacation 'thout no limit dis side of fifty cents per each history. I'm gwine out on de bayou an' read my Bible, an' refleck on de future, an' repent of my history lies, an' fish. De trouts is bitin' fine!"

"You done broke down powerful early, Vinegar," Skeeter said tearfully. "You busts us up complete."

"Tain't fair fer you niggers to hire me so cheap," Vinegar protested. "I ain't got but one-fourth of one measly copper cent fer each word of dem biographies, an' eve'y word is a lie. I demands one-half a copper cent fer each word. Book-writin' has done riz—ef not, de book has done fell!"

"De trouble am dis, Vinegar," Skeeter explained. "You done already collected two bits fer writin' up some of dem coons, an' now ef you go up on de price in de middle of dis job, de rest of de suckers will git mad an' kick."

"I knows dat all right," Vinegar replied. "I ain't aimin' to collect from any candidates. I expects to draw twenty-five cents extry fer each name from de fund whut you is collectin'."

Skeeter made a mighty howl at this; but when he found that otherwise the production of the biographies would cease, he made a satisfactory amount of protest about it, offered a few profane cordialities, and consented to the raise.

Then there came another hitch in the proceedings. Skeeter hunted up Stogie, the photographer.

"Looky here, Stogie, dar ain't but one hundred niggers whut has had deir koodaks took up to now, an' de rest of 'em say dey cain't affode de expensh. Whut is under dem succumstances?"

"Dey kin git in widout no picture fer half-price," Stogie said promptly. "I'm gittin' tired wuckin' at my job, anyhow; an' I figgers dat one hundred pictures will sot de book off fine. Ef a coon ain't got money enough to pay fer a photo, he don't look like nothin' nohow an' ain't wuth seein' in no book."

"We kin pad de back side of de book wid all dem little names an' histories," Skeeter said. "Dey won't take up so much room, an' de book won't be so big."

"Dat's de notion," Stogie agreed. "Some of 'em, maybe, cain't pay half-price. Let 'em in cheaper, an' us 'll hab deir records printed wid smaller print."

"De idear is to git deir money," Skeeter replied. "We'll make pie out of eve'y sucker's dough!"

When the stuff was ready to be put into type, Skeeter and Stogie carried it to a colored printer in New Orleans who had a two-quart print-shop and a one-dog-power

printing-machine. They made endless talk in their effort to close their bargain. By clumsy calculations they ascertained that a book of five hundred pages would be large enough. As the pictures were small and the biographies short, one page could be devoted to each character, with the picture at the top and the little sketch underneath. The book was to be bound in a paper cover and the cost reduced to a minimum. The printer demanded twenty-five

here an' let you have de books in about a month. I expects de money fer my wuck in advance, so I kin pay dem cheap helps."

"Is you ever printed a book befo'?" Skeeter asked.

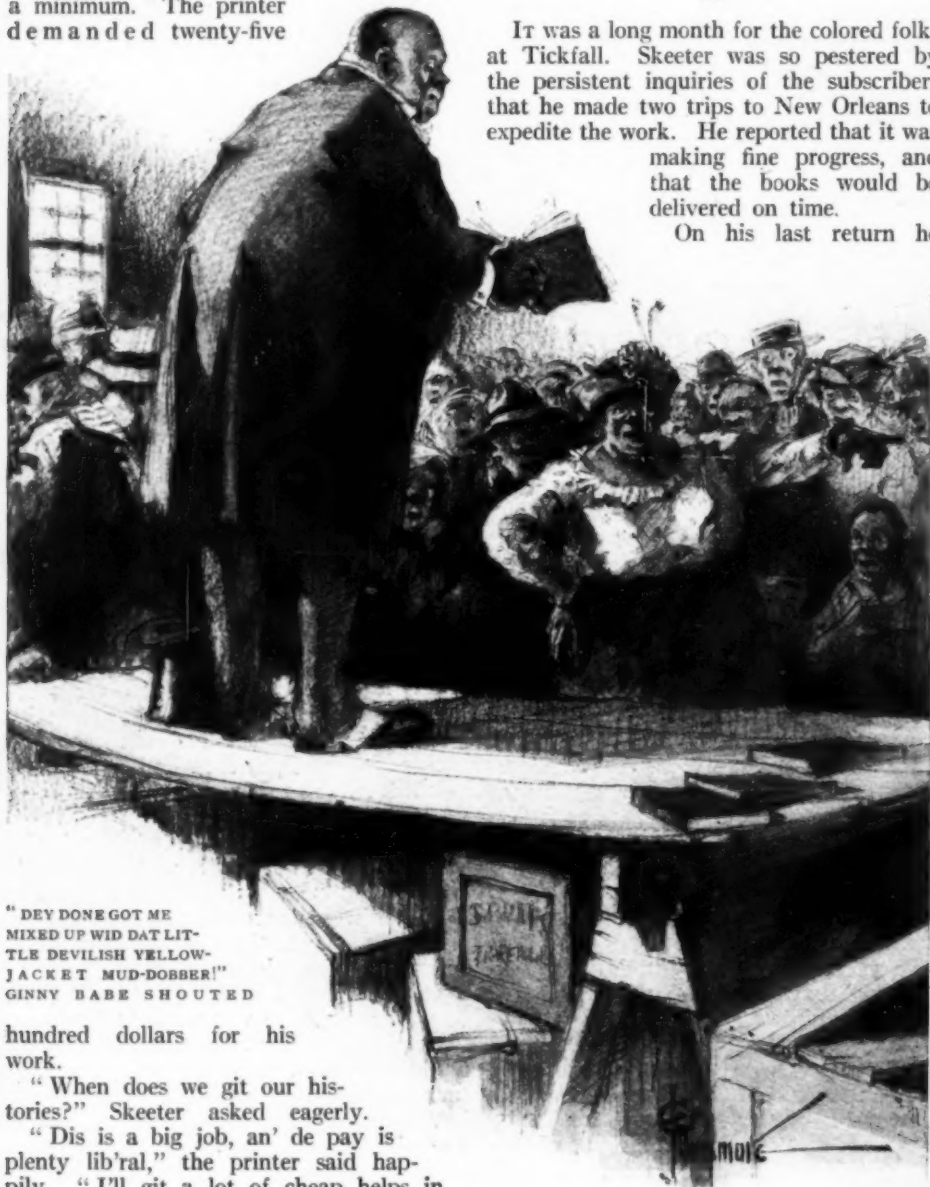
"No, but it looks easy," the printer said confidently. "I am sure I kin do it."

"I hopes you have good luck," Skeeter said. "Good-by!"

IV

It was a long month for the colored folks at Tickfall. Skeeter was so pestered by the persistent inquiries of the subscribers that he made two trips to New Orleans to expedite the work. He reported that it was making fine progress, and that the books would be delivered on time.

On his last return he



"DEY DONE GOT ME
MIXED UP WID DAT LIT-
TLE DEVILISH YELLOW-
JACKET MUD-DOBBER!"
GINNY BABE SHOUTED

hundred dollars for his work.

"When does we git our histories?" Skeeter asked eagerly.

"Dis is a big job, an' de pay is plenty lib'ral," the printer said happily. "I'll git a lot of cheap helps in

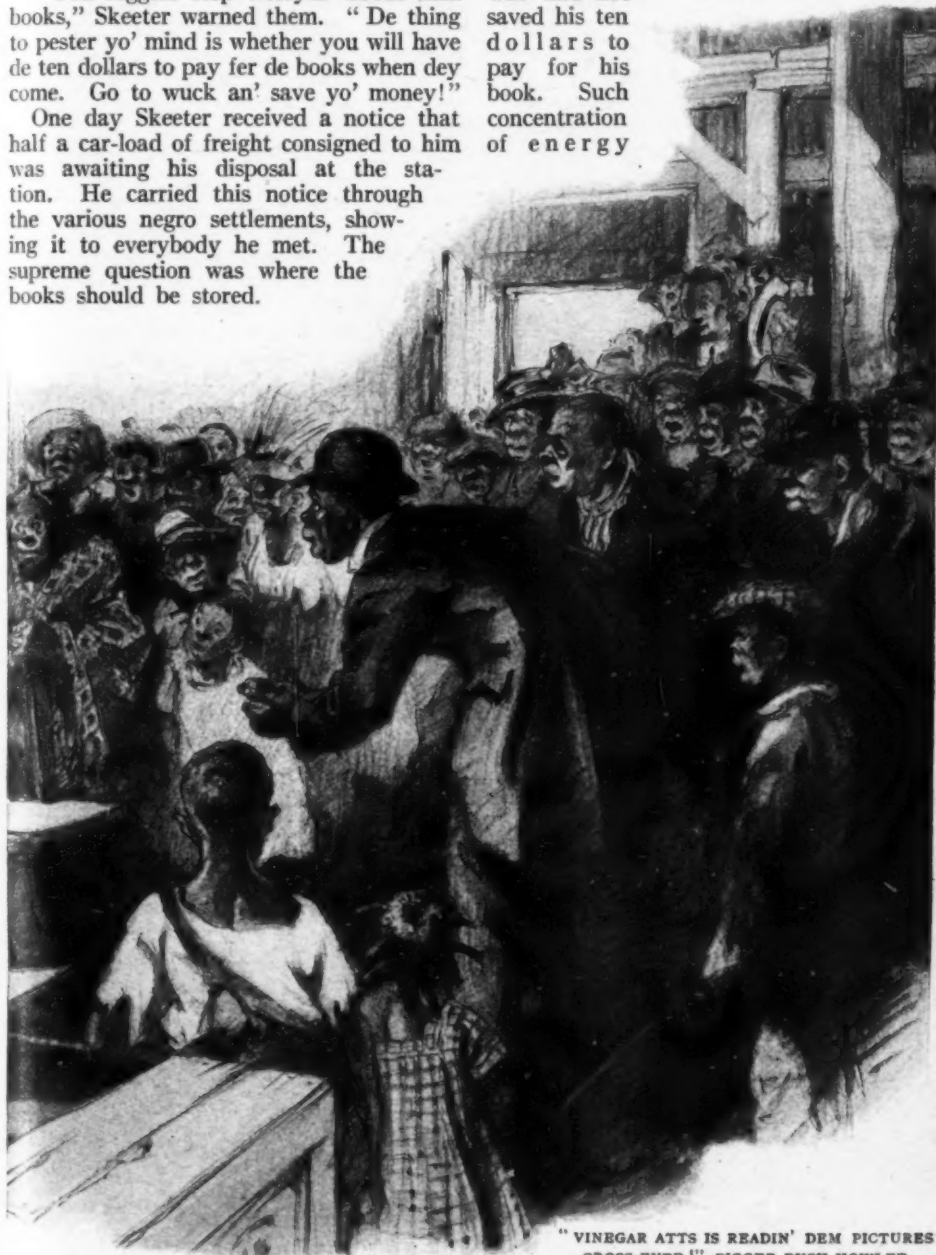
brought back a dozen cuts of some of the best-known negroes and tacked them upon the walls of his saloon. All came to see, and were so pleased that they stormed with childish impatience and eagerness as the time for the delivery of the books drew nearer.

"You niggers stop worryin' about dem books," Skeeter warned them. "De thing to pester yo' mind is whether you will have de ten dollars to pay fer de books when dey come. Go to wuck an' save yo' money!"

One day Skeeter received a notice that half a car-load of freight consigned to him was awaiting his disposal at the station. He carried this notice through the various negro settlements, showing it to everybody he met. The supreme question was where the books should be stored.

"Stack 'em up in de Shoofly church," Vinegar Atts entreated. "I'll take good keer of 'em, an' we'll have a great 'rousement day when we pay up an' git our books."

The subscribers had worked for a month with a real purpose, and there was not one who had not saved his ten dollars to pay for his book. Such concentration of energy



"VINEGAR ATTS IS READIN' DEM PICTURES CROSS-EYED!" FIGGER BUSH HOWLED

and continuity of purpose was extraordinary. When Skeeter Butts found that a thousand persons would be assembled at one place and at one time, he threw up his hands in desperation.

"I never seed a thousan' niggers at one time!" he squealed.

"Us 'll have five times more dan dat," Vinegar estimated. "Eve'y man whut buys a book will fotch his whole fambly along to take a look at it."

"My Lawd!" Skeeter wailed. "Some of dese cullud folks is got sixteen chillun!"

"Us better meet at de old cotton-shed," Vinegar Atts proposed. "Dat is big enough to hold five thousan' bales of cotton, an' it ought to contain at leas' five thousan' niggers."

"You cain't pile niggers up on top of each yuther like cotton," Skeeter pointed out; "but we will try it at dat place, an' ef we git overflowed we kin move out to de old sand-pit."

The distribution took place on Sunday afternoon. Six wagons hauled the boxes of books from their place of storage in the Shoofly church and stacked them up behind an improvised counter in the old cotton-shed.

Vinegar Atts made a speech.

"De rule of dis distribution am dis," he announced. "I'll open dis book at de picture of a suttin man or woman an' read cut loud de name dat is under de picture an' de history of his life. Ef de subscriber finds dat de record is all right, he kin advance forward an' pay Skeeter Butts ten dollars an' tote away his books."

Vinegar knocked the top off the first box and lifted out a book. The great crowd pushed forward to hear what was read. No assemblage of human beings was ever so intensely silent.

"De fust picture in dis book is de photograph of de man who done most in gittin' de book up," Vinegar announced. "I refers to Mr. Skeeter Butts."

He turned the book toward the crowd, and those who were near enough to see confirmed Vinegar's statement. Vinegar continued:

"De story under dis picture reads as follows: 'De subject of dis sketch was borned seventy year ago on de Flournoy plantation in Tickfall parish. She is de mother of Hitch Diamond, de Tickfall Tiger, prize-fighter. She wus a slave of de father of Sheriff John Flournoy. She is de keeper

of de leadin' colored boardin'-house in Tickfall, an' weighs four hundred an' six pounds—'"

By the time Vinegar had read this far the solemn enunciation with which he began had petered out to a plaintive squeak, and he was laboring under evident distress and embarrassment.

"Dem words don't fit dat picture at de top of dat page!" a man down in the audience shouted with a laugh of pure amusement. "Dey got Skeeter crossed with a cow or somepin!"

Skeeter Butts slowly rose to his feet and gazed into the faces of his friends like one whose wits have been shattered by some great blow. It was an awful revelation to him that he had been changed from male to female, that he was seventy years old, had been the slave of a man who had died before he was born, weighed nearly as much as a bale of cotton, and was the mother of a prize-fighter!

"My Gawd!" he exclaimed aloud.

Vinegar turned and looked at him with infinite compassion.

"Dis 'pears to me like some kind of a bad mistake, Skeeter," he said. "Dey done got you mixed up. I'll turn over to de next page an' try some more."

The next page contained the portrait of a woman so corpulent that she resembled a balloon tied in the middle by an apron-string. She was not only fat, but ugly and toothless. Through the rolls of facial adipose that made her cheeks look like the jowls of a pig, there were tiny pig-like eyes which even in the cut showed the shrewdness and sneering contemptuousness which were her characteristics in real life.

"Dis next picture is Ginny Babe Chew," Vinegar announced. "De life history am dis: 'De subject of dis sketch boasts de reputation of bein' de best-dressed colored man an' de most popular business man of our race in Tickfall. He has always moved in de highest alcoholic colored circles, runs de Henscratch Saloon, an' is famous fer an advicer to all of his friends. He is small for his size, weighs ninety-eight pounds, but is full of pep like a bumblebee. He is a fine dancer, and loves to act in shows and nigger minstrels—'"

While this was being read Ginny Babe caused a commotion in the crowd by pushing up to the front. She did not appear to be enjoying this vivid biographical sketch of herself.

Suddenly Hitch Diamond's great voice rolled like thunder through the building.

"Maw! Oh, maw!" he bellowed. "Jes' listen to what dis damfool book is doin' to you!"

"Dat ain't me!" she squalled. "I ain't no dressy man, an' I ain't no barkeep', an' I don't give no advices, an' I don't dance— an' Gawd knows I weighed mo' dan ninety-eight pounds de day I wus born! I never wus no little runt. I's always been a stylish stout!"

She turned and glared at Skeeter Butts. Pointing her finger at him, she made him cringe as if all the malignity of her nature was concentrated in that gesture.

"Dey done got me mixed up wid dat little devilish yellow-jacket mud-dobber!" she shouted.

"Vinegar Atts is readin' dem pictures cross-eyed!" Figger Bush howled, as if he had discovered an explanation for the mix-up.

During all this time the silence in the great cotton-shed was unbroken except for the interruptions recorded above. Many of the people did not comprehend what had happened, being slow of mind and unfamiliar with the wonders of book-publication. How could they know that the cheap labor which the negro job-printer in New Orleans had secured to help him had got the whole business in a mess? Most of all, how could they know that one employee sadly overlooked in that shop had been a competent proof-reader?

Vinegar turned to Skeeter, and said in a troubled tone:

"Skeeter, it 'pears to me like I ain't seein' straight. Dis readin' sounds like I got my mind all crooked. I move we adjourn until I gits straightened out."

"Eve'ybody set down an' rest yo' foots fer a while!" Skeeter ordered. "Me and Vinegar Atts is gwine out to hold a private session."

V

SKETEER and Vinegar entered what had once been the business office in the old cotton-shed, and were joined a moment later by Stogie. Two of the men were hopelessly befuddled and distressed.

"Us triplets is blowed-up suckers!" Stogie exclaimed in tragic tones. "Us won't never hold up our heads in dis town. Eve'ybody will laugh at us an' buzz us tur'ble fer gittin' messed up in dis!"

"Less take a look at dat book," Skeeter said hopefully. "Mebbe Vinegar ain't been readin' it on straight."

They spread the book open before them and inspected its pages with inconsolable hopelessness. It was worse than the most pessimistic man could expect. For instance, under the picture of Hitch Diamond, the Tickfall Tiger, who was a prize-fighter, there was a biographical sketch of Junie Toon, eighteen years old, female gender, who looked more like a little sick, sore-eyed kitten than a tiger. Pap Curtain's picture carried the life story of Hopey Prophet, the famous Tickfall cook, a woman of voluble tongue, quick temper, and much practise in throwing cooking-pots. Vinegar Atts found attached to his name the story he himself had written of old Isaiah Gaitskill, the venerable superintendent of the Gaitskill hog-camp, whose chief claim to distinction was that he had been married five times, his fifth wife being a widow who weighed four hundred pounds and had nine ready-made children.

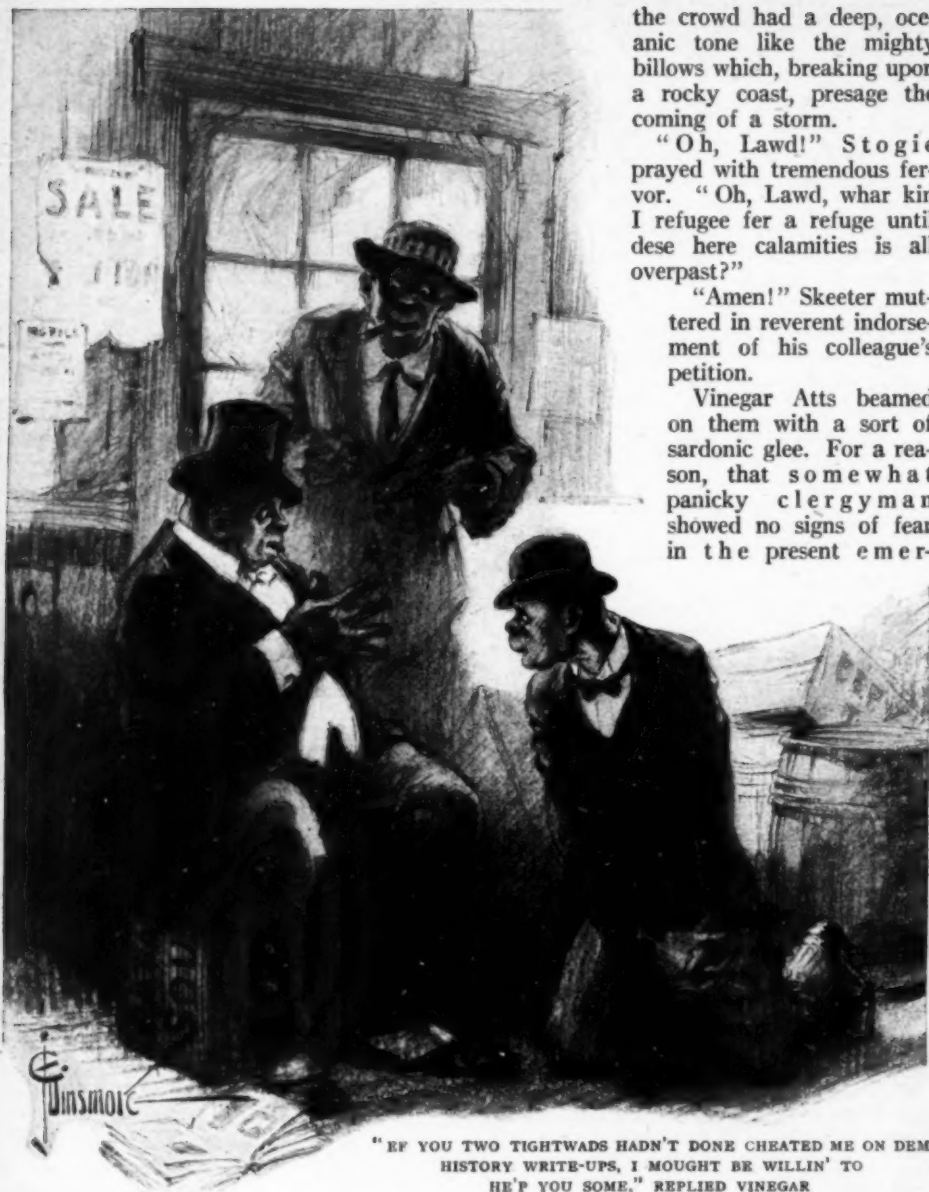
It seemed that the men who worked on the book in the printing-office were merely human, and could not make a mistake every time, so it happened in a few instances that the name and the face fitted the sketch beneath them; but the general average for errors was undoubtedly the best record ever attained by folks who were trying to do something correctly.

The plight of the men who had helped achieve this appalling accumulation of blunders and inaccuracies was laughable only to those in nowise involved. When they thought of the sum of money in the transaction, they sweated great drops of agony. When they considered the possibility of becoming entangled in personal pugilistic affrays with the irate subscribers, who might interpret the literary blunders as slander, libel, and calumny, their hearts were filled with dire forebodings. Every angle of their predicament became to them more acute and distressing, until at last Skeeter voiced the deepest longing of his soul:

"My Gawd, I wish I wus dead!"

"Us is got a right smart chance fer three fun'rals, Skeeter," Stogie said in lugubrious tones. Then, glancing about with furtive eyes, he asked: "Ain't dar no way fer me to git outen dis cotton-shed 'thout bein' perceived?"

"Don't talk dat way," Skeeter Butts



"EF YOU TWO TIGHTWADS HADN'T DONE CHEATED ME ON DEM HISTORY WRITE-UPS, I MOUGHT BE WILLIN' TO HE'P YOU SOME," REPLIED VINEGAR

said pleadingly. "Ef we die, we dies together; ef we hangs, we hangs together; an' ef we escapes away, I wants to be de head of de escapement."

In the great shed outside the voices of the crowd had risen to a sullen and mutinous roar that broke thunderously against the thin walls of the office, where the distressed men cowered with a fear that nearly dislocated their very bones. The voices of

the crowd had a deep, oceanic tone like the mighty billows which, breaking upon a rocky coast, presage the coming of a storm.

"Oh, Lawd!" Stogie prayed with tremendous fervor. "Oh, Lawd, whar kin I refugee fer a refuge until dese here calamities is all overpast?"

"Amen!" Skeeter muttered in reverent indorsement of his colleague's petition.

Vinegar Atts beamed on them with a sort of sardonic glee. For a reason, that somewhat panicky clergyman showed no signs of fear in the present emer-

gency; in fact, he was getting a great deal of satisfaction out of the distress of his collaborators.

"De good Lawd ain't got no notion to refugee a nigger who puts his head in a bear-trap," Vinegar bellowed; "not even in answer to prayer. De good Lawd don't he'p no fool. He ain't got no patience wid fools."

"But I wus de kind of fool dat didn't

know no better," Skeeter wailed. "De Lawd knows I warn't no scholard, an' didn't know nothin' about monkeyin' wid a history book. I ain' no writin' man; I's a bizness man."

"You wus book man enough to sneak me outen my fair pay fer doin' all dat book-writin'," Vinegar retorted. "I done all de heavy brain wuck and fotch up de lightest pay."

"Dis ain't no time to be makin' slams," Stogie suggested, with an uneasy glance toward the wall, through which there came the increasing thunder of the impatient crowd. "I ain't to blame fer dis mix-up. I didn't do nothin' but take koodaks."

"You toted de hist'ries to N'Awleens," Skeeter reminded him, "an' you mixed dem all up."

"Dat road is so rough dat it jolts de buttons offen my clothes eve'y time I rides on it," Stogie replied. "But shakin' de box didn't muss up nothin'. Eve'y man's hist'ry wus folded aroun' his koodak an' wropped up wid a string, because I seed Vinegar Atts fix it dat way."

"I does my wuck c'reck," Vinegar remarked, glaring at his collaborators like a disgusted old sheep; "but I don't git paid fer it lib'ral."

At that moment something hit the side of the office, sounding like the crack of doom. It was probably a brick or a monkey-wrench.

"Dey done start throwin' things, niggers!" Skeeter sighed in despair. "Ammunition is too high fer dem blacks to waste bullets on us niggers."

"I'm gittin' hongry fer solitude, bruders," Stogie mourned. "Ef I could git outen dis place right now, I'd shore go an' hunt fer it."

"Don't git so hot," Vinegar admonished him. "You'll hab plenty solitude coolin' off in a box wid six foots of yearth pressin' down on yo' face!"

Thereupon Stogie sprang to his feet, opened the dreadful volume, and began to turn the pages. At the inspection of each horrible mistake, the geyser of his wrath spouted forth, until finally he tossed the despicable book over into the corner of the office with an eruption of profanity which emptied the crater.

"Yo' tongue shore wucks easy in de socket, brudder," Vinegar said admiringly. "You had oughter be more keerful about whar you unload yo' mind. You mought

damage somebody, full of malice an' all unrighteousness like dat."

"Ef I didn't hab no mo' gumption dan dis yeller baboon, Skeeter Butts, I mought talk flowery an' idiotic," Stogie howled. "Skeeter is to blame fer dis, gwine aroun' an' talkin' it up to eve'ybody."

"I'm as innercent as a unborn baby," Skeeter squalled. "Innercent as unborn twin babies!"

By this time the sound from the great crowd in the cotton-shed was so ominous that the men felt that they could hear the rafters groan and the side walls creak with the volume and pressure of impatience. Skeeter had endured all he could, and his eyes began to drip brine like a dill pickle that had been bit. Stogie's profane expletives exhausted the subject and left a deficit, and then he joined Skeeter in his sacred grief and began to blubber like a camel.

Only Vinegar Atts was undisturbed. He looked like a big black Jove prepared to hurl a thunderbolt. Finally Stogie appealed to him.

"Elder Atts, I knows you don't keer no mo' fer me dan you does fer a sick dawg. You wouldn't do me no favor nohow; but Skeeter is yo' friend, an' he is in powerful trouble. Caint you take pity on Skeeter an' do somepin fer dat little yeller fiddle-footed fool?"

"You two weepin' niggers shore is a painful spectacle," Vinegar replied in disgust. "Ef you two tightwads hadn't done cheated me on dem history write-ups, I mought be willin' to he'p you some."

"You feels like you wusn't paid enough?" Skeeter asked hopefully.

"I knows it," Vinegar nodded.

Skeeter put both hands in his pockets and brought out a roll of bills in each hand. Stogie did the same. Vinegar eyed the currency with the facial expression of a tiger getting close to the meat course.

"How much mo' does you want us to bestow fer each life history, cash money?" Stogie asked.

"One dollar per each would be about right," Vinegar announced. "Count me out one thousan' dollars."

"Us is between de bull an' de bulldog, Stogie," Skeeter said, as he fingered his money. "He'p me count out dis thousan' bucks."

When Vinegar pocketed the money, he rose and smiled upon his two troubled com-

panions, who gaped up at him like chickens with the pip.

"You brudders foller atter me. I's gwine to show you how to git out of dis mess."

VI

VINEGAR walked out to the crowd and climbed upon a box, where all could see him and hear his words.

"All you niggers listen to me! I introduces myse'f as de smartest man in Loozanny! You niggers think dis here book wus a mistake, but I announces dat dis book was done wrong a puppus. I knowed all along it would never suit fer dis book to be printed wid de pictures an' de life hist'ries of one thousan' cullud pussons. Supposin' dis book got in de hands of de gram jury an' dem white men read all about us an' den fotch in deir gram jury repote! Supposin' ef de sheriff wus huntin' fer us an' had our pictures all wroten down in a book!"

"My gosh!" Pap Curtain exploded. "I never figgered on de gram jury when I quoted my life hist'ry. I wants me name outen dat book. I never thunk!"

"Of co'se not!" Vinegar bellowed. "But I done remembered de gram jury an' all yo' sins, an' so under yo' picture I printed de life story of dear sister Hopey Prophet, so dat de gram jury cain't never git de proper facks on you!"

It took two minutes for this amazing announcement to soak in. Then there was a whoop of approbation. All had overlooked the possible relation of their pictures and biographies to criminal jurisprudence. The crowd began to fizzle and pop like a bunch of firecrackers. Hitch Diamond's great voice roared like a toy cannon:

"Whut's de matter wid Vinegar Atts?"

"He's—all—right!" was the response.

"Who votes to elect him bishop of de Affikin Mefdis Chu'ch?"

"Aye! Aye! All of us does!" came the thunderous chorus.

Then a wailing voice as high and clear as the howl of a coyote began to whine:

"Dey say Elder Atts ain't got no style,
Got no style, got no style—
When he's nothin' but style all de while!"

Skeeter Butts rose from despair like a man who emerges from deep water. He drew a breath of relief which threatened to suck in all the air in the shed. It took him

about a moment to recover his mental poise, and then he made an announcement which was vastly pleasing to the negroes.

"At de fust off-startin' of dis bizness, we figgered dat our books would cost us mo' dan dey did. We made a cheap trade in N'Awleens an' got de wuck done fer lesser. All you folks kin git yo' books fer jes' whut you done paid already, an' it won't cost you another cent."

"Git in line an' walk forward!" Vinegar Atts howled. "Walk up, take yo' books, an' git out. You kin cut out de picture of yo'se'f an' all you' friends, put de proper history under each picture, an' paste it on de wall!"

One thousand negroes in that shed found themselves in possession of ten dollars which they had expected to spend. They thought nothing of the hopelessly muddled book they had purchased. Their joy was over the money they had saved in the transaction. They all walked forward, picked up a volume with a happy smile, and carried it away with them.

As they marched out, there rose a mighty song of exultation from the crowd. This song is adaptable to nearly every human experience, requiring a few slight changes to fit the needs of each occasion. A thousand voices began to sing:

"Eve'ybody whut talks about heaven
Ain't gwine to heaven!"

There was a moment's silence. Then some man with a voice like a son of thunder uttered a mighty bellow:

"I'm got a book!"

Instantly followed the great chorus:

"I'm got a book!
All Gawd's people am got a book!
I'm gwine read my book in heaven,
Read my book all over Gawd's heaven,
All Gawd's people am got a book!"

At the head of the procession walked Vinegar, Stogie, and Skeeter, with Skeeter in the middle of the trio. Skeeter was talking at a great rate, and his waving arms were throwing off gestures like a pinwheel shedding sparks.

"I ain't no scholard, an' dis am de fust time I ever monkeyed wid a book; but I kin tell you dar is millions of money in it. I favors us three travelin' all over de worl' an' fotchin' out a history book eve'ywhar we goes!"

The Gem of the Collection

BY BEN AMES WILLIAMS

Illustrated by De Alton Valentine

THE limousine stopped at the curb as softly as a cat purrs. It was big and black and shiny. The chauffeur—not a bad-looking chap, that chauffeur—stepped nimbly to the sidewalk and opened the door with something that was almost like a bow. There was a hint of amusement in the twist of his lips and the curve of his back, as if he were playing a rather amusing part and laughing at himself as he played it.

But there was no hint of amusement on the countenance of the man who alighted from the car. He was shaved to the quick; his cheeks were red as tenderloin; he was very big, and his silk hat and his patent leather shoes and the braid on his cutaway were as black and shiny as the limousine. He buttoned his pearl-gray gloves, cocked his cigar to the corner of his mouth, and spoke through locked teeth.

"Drive two or three times around the block, my man," he said. "I'll be down in five minutes."

The chauffeur touched his cap. He did not look like the sort of a fellow you would call "my man" with impunity. Nevertheless, he touched his cap, got into his seat, woke the car to life, and rolled away. It is true that when he was out of the big man's sight, he smiled.

The big man went up the stairs that led from the street into the lobby. He entered the elevator; he was jerked skyward; he traversed a corridor, and read at last upon the glass panel of a door the name he sought:

OVERLY DETECTIVE AGENCY

H. L. Overly, Manager

He opened the door and stepped inside. The little stenographer at her desk in the waiting-room got up timidly, looked at the big man, and asked:

"Who will you see, sir?"

The big man took off his gloves. He reached into his pocket, produced a small gold case, and opened it.

"Nifty little thing, this case, isn't it?" he remarked amiably. "I had it made to order—fourteen hundred dollars. Only way to carry cards. I'm J. Badgerly Rudd." He handed the little stenographer a card to prove it. "You know what I want, of course."

The girl hesitated timidly; then her face began to work with the portents of an approaching cataclysm. She fumbled feverishly in her pocket, got out a postage-stamp-size handkerchief, wadded it into a ball, and jammed it against her mouth, or her nose, or something. Then she sneezed—an appallingly violent sneeze for such a little girl.

J. Badgerly snorted. The girl wiped the tears out of her eyes; and then she shook her head and looked up at the big man.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I'm not quite sure I do know—"

J. Badgerly snorted again. He looked around, and saw a door marked "H. L. Overly." Without further word to the young lady, he crossed to this door, opened it, marched in, and banged it behind him.

The little stenographer looked after him in a timid dismay. She wondered what he was going to say; but she could not hear. There were sound-proof doors and walls throughout the offices of the agency, for business reasons.

What J. Badgerly did was to march across to the desk where H. L. Overly sat. Before Overly had time to rise, J. Badgerly had drawn from his pocket a long wallet of rich leather, mounted with gold. He opened it, and fished out a freshly laundered thousand-dollar bill. He laid this interesting piece of paper before the astonished eyes of the detective.

Overly got up and looked at the money and at J. Badgerly, and smiled.

"Good morning," he said. "What can I do for you, sir?"

"You can earn that thousand dollars, to begin with, by saying just two words," said J. Badgerly.

"That's fair enough," Overly agreed. "What shall I say?"

"Go to the door there and tell that sneezing ignoramus in the waiting-room that she's fired."

Overly smiled.

"Ah!" he said. "You must be J. Badgerly Rudd."

"I am."

Overly thrust out his hand; J. Badgerly gripped it. Then Overly walked to the door, and opened it. The timid stenographer looked up at him.

"You're fired," he said curtly.

Then he shut the door, came back, and picked up the thousand-dollar bill. He folded it neatly and put it in his vest pocket. After which he motioned J. Badgerly to a seat, and sat down himself.

"Now, what else can I do for you?" he asked.

"Y' understand," J. Badgerly warned him, "that girl's not to be hired back again soon as my back is turned."

Overly nodded.

"Of course! Now, what else?"

J. Badgerly grinned; he relaxed in his chair. He fumbled in his capacious pockets and produced another case—gold, this time, with a monogram of precious stones. He pressed the snap, opened it, and presented it to Overly. The detective saw a neat row of oily, brown cigars, cradled in golden beds. He reached for one, and took it reverentially. J. Badgerly took another, and returned the case to his pocket.

"Now that cigar," he said, turning it slowly in his hand, "is the most expensive cigar in America—probably the most expensive cigar in the world to-day. I bought the finest plantation in Cuba, and they do nothing but concentrate on my tobacco; and I've got the finest cigar-makers on the island working there for me. I figure this cigar costs me just about twenty-two dollars—for every cigar; but it's worth it, Mr. Overly. Smoke it, and see!"

Overly was lighting the cigar with the gravest care.

"I've read about your cigars in the papers, Mr. Rudd," he said deferentially.

Rudd nodded.

"Yes, the newspaper boys have to have their fun, Mr. Overly. I've given them something to write about. I've showed 'em some things, now, haven't I?"

"I should say so! Ever since you came to town."

Rudd wagged his ponderous head.

"Seems like a long time ago. I've seen life since then, Overly."

Overly hesitated for a moment; then he asked:

"By the way, which one of these stories about the way you made your money—which one of them's true, Mr. Rudd?"

II

RUDD laughed; he waved a large hand.

"In a way, all of them," he said. "All of them. Started with the platinum. I'd always known the stuff was there on my Colorado ranch. When the price was right, I looked into it. Sold out for five million in ten days. Put the money into copper, and war babies. This was just after the war started, you understand. Cleaned up fifteen million in three years. That's me, Mr. Overly! And there you are."

"You've taught us a new gospel of money in New York. There have been spenders here before, but there never was one just like you, sir."

"I always said," J. Badgerly announced, "that there wasn't anything money wouldn't buy. Some didn't believe me. I've showed them. Remember when I first came to town. Couldn't get a room—hotels all full; so I bought the Hotel Aphrodite, and had the whole shebang to myself. That's a sample, Mr. Overly. Everything the best that money can buy; and money can buy the best of everything. Take that girl of yours. She sneezed at me; she didn't know who I was. I bought her place from you—had her fired. She'll know me now!"

"I should say so," Overly agreed.

Rudd hitched up his trousers at the knees.

"What I came to you about, Mr. Overly—have you any men on your staff that can act like gentlemen?"

"Oh, yes, I should say so!" Overly replied cheerfully. "Of course, they have their limitations; but I should say they can, Mr. Rudd."

Rudd banged his knee.

"I want about four of them to-morrow

for Ruth's wedding, Overly—to watch the presents. Never thought of it till this morning. Said to a man—my lawyer: 'What's the most expensive detective agency in New York?' He said you were; so here I am. Want the best men you've got—the most expensive men. Is four enough? More if you say so. Many as you say."

Overly considered.

"I should suppose four would be enough," he decided. "When do you want them?"

Rudd reached for that big pocketbook again, drew out another thousand-dollar bill, and tossed it to Overly.

"There's your preliminary fee," he said. He threw over another. "Give that to your men, and tell them to go out and get an expensive rig of clothes. Get the

"No, they'll want some joolry, and watches, and things." He thrust a fourth bill on the detective. "Have 'em spend it




"YOU CAN EARN THAT THOUSAND DOLLARS BY SAYING JUST TWO WORDS," SAID MR. RUDD

best. If that ain't enough — here, better have another thousand."

"Oh, a thousand will be enough for their clothes," Overly said deprecatingly.

Rudd shook his head.



all. I want 'em to look like gentlemen, and act like gentlemen, and everything. I'll know if they don't. I didn't know when I came to town, but I hired a gentleman to teach me. Paid him fifty thousand; pay him fifty thousand a year now, just to stick around. He shows me how to dress. See this scarf-pin? Black pearl. Cost me seventeen thousand. He chose it for me. Helped me design my card-case, and cigar-case,

and things like that. He knows what's what, all right! Course, I've got a natural taste myself. My friends are gentlemen, and I want these men of yours to look as if they belonged—the real thing, see?”

Overly assured him that the operatives would do him credit. Then Rudd got up to go.

“I suppose you've received some beautiful gifts,” Overly remarked casually. “It's to be a big wedding, I understand.”

“Absolutely,” said Rudd, with new enthusiasm. “Biggest and the most expensive the town ever saw. Presents! My God, man, there's millions in them! Friends of mine sent 'em. I make friends quick. Spend my money, you know. Believe me, I'm giving Ruth a few things myself. Brand-new house to be married in. None of us have been in it yet. Decorators just finished yesterday. Everything the most expensive there is. Special steel room to put the presents in. You'd never know it was steel. All covered with gold-leaf. Grandest sight you ever saw. But there, I've got to hike. I'll be here at two to get your men. Have 'em ready, with their duds. Now mind, they've got to look like gentlemen, absolutely. If that money isn't enough—here, I'll—”

He reached for his pocketbook, and, over the detective's protests—not too strenuous—slid across another bill, sister in denomination to those which had gone before.

“Blow all of it in,” he commanded. “Don't save a cent. No, here's another. That's a thousand apiece for each of the four, besides the thousand for you. I want 'em to have every cent of the thousand on them—rings, pins, watches, silk from the skin out. That's the only way to feel like a gentleman. I know! Go to it now, Overly. This wedding is going to mark time; they're going to set their clocks from it, from this on. I'll be back at two.”

As he went out through the waiting-room, he saw that the stenographer was gone, and nodded with satisfaction. Overly followed him to the door; then he came back and pressed a bell. A man came in. Overly looked up and grinned.

“Bill,” he said, “here's something rich. Round up three more and come back here, right away.”

“What for?” Bill asked.

“Guards at the Rudd wedding.”

Bill considered.

“Le's see. Blint do?”

“Sure. And—can you get O'Rann?”

“Yeah. Him and Kennedy and Blint all right?”

“I should say so. Hustle, now! I'll spill it to you all together. Got to move sharp, Bill!”

“I'm gone,” said Bill, and he was.

III

WHEN J. Badgerly Rudd returned to Overly's office at two o'clock, the four operatives were waiting for him. No lily of the field was ever arrayed like one of these. Bill Stone, the phlegmatic one, wore a cut-away and a silk hat and patent leathers that were replicas of Rudd's own. There were three rings on his fingers, a big diamond in each. Bill had always wanted a diamond ring.

Blint, the wiry little man, had dressed himself in a frock coat. It was unbuttoned, and this fact made it possible to see something less than a yard of heavy gold chain draped across his lean front. He showed Rudd the watch at the end of this chain. It was worth every cent of the six hundred he had paid, as bullion alone.

O'Rann, the large, pompous man, had shown artistry in his purchases. His hat was a broad-brimmed black Stetson, his coat was like Blint's, and his tie was white as snow.

Kennedy, the pulpy, middle-sized operative, wore checks. He looked like a camouflaged gunboat. His taste, too, ran to rings; but he had a scarf-pin like the headlight of a locomotive. It was a diamond horseshoe. Kennedy had followed the horses in his unregenerate days.

J. Badgerly looked them over, one by one, and was content. They would strike the eye; they looked expensive; and they looked like gentlemen. You could see that at a glance. He said as much.

“You look like the real thing,” he told them. “Did you get silk socks and underclothes?”

“Sure!” said Bill Stone.

Rudd made them pull up their trousers to prove what they said. Blint proudly displayed the diamonds that were set in his sock supporters.

“Now that's one I never thought of!” J. Badgerly exclaimed. “I'll have to get some myself. Mine are silk and gold, but I never thought of the sparklers. Hell's fire, that's a fine idea! Well, come along, if you're ready. We'll be on our way.”

The four moved toward the door; and Rudd shook Overly by the hand.

"You've done yourself proud, friend," he said. "Here! I'm a man that appreciates the real thing. Stick this in your pocket."

"This" was another thousand-dollar bill. Overly was still creasing it between his fingers when the door closed behind them.

The big limousine was waiting for them at the curb, the chauffeur standing at attention by the door. They piled in and settled back in the deep cushions. There was room and to spare for them all.

"Some car, boys!" Kennedy murmured, sighing-fatly.

Rudd beamed.

"You bet!" he agreed. "I designed this car myself, too. None of your stock models! See the gold fittings in here? All solid. Outside fittings all silver, even the hub-caps. Wheel's mahogany, and all the jiggers in front there are silver. Plate-glass windows. Upholstery alone cost me four thousand dollars. Real tapestry. Wife uses this car more than I do. That's her manicure dingus, in the side pocket, there. That cost me twelve hundred—gold and diamonds. Oriental rug on the floor here. Whole thing came to eighteen thousand. All hand-made. Even the engine's hand-forged. Most expensive car in the United States, boys; and you're riding in it with me. Believe me, when you stick with me, you get the real thing!"

His eye, wandering through the glass that separated them from the chauffeur, lit on that young man's neatly garbed shoulders, and he chuckled and jerked his thumb that way.

"Even the chauffeur," he added. "He's the highest-paid chauffeur in the country. Comes from Colorado. Him and Ruth used to be kids together, playing around, going to parties and all. Son of an old pal of mine. Good man, but no head for money. This boy was professor of engineering at the Colorado School of Mines. Expert on automobiles. I hired him. Costs me fifteen thousand a year. He was getting five at the school. Didn't want to come to me, but I boosted the ante, and I got Ruth to write and tell him he was a fool not to come; so he did. I get what I go after, boys—everything that money can buy; and money can buy the best of everything. That's my motto, every time!"

"You're dead right, there, Mr. Rudd," O'Rann said pompously. "I've always said the same."

"I can see right now," little Blint exclaimed, "that this is going to be some wedding!"

"Absolutely," Rudd agreed. "New York will set its clocks from this wedding, I'm telling you. There'll be big money there to-morrow, boys. Hayes is coming. He's the man that made seven millions out of a corkscrew that wouldn't bust the cork. And Horrison. Cleaned up his pile on the war babies. And—hell, you'll see them to-morrow. The most expensive guests you ever saw in a bunch, and the most expensive wedding. Everything new, special—even the guy that marries them, this new bishop, Bishop Santry. Ordained to-day. First thing he's going to do as bishop is marry Ruth. I gave him fifty thousand to buy his duds with. He wears a phony collar, and pants, and stockings, and all that, you know. You'll see him. Had to promise fifty thousand to his church to get him; and I'm going to give him a check for a hundred thousand for himself. That's the biggest lump any sky-pilot ever got for marrying people, they tell me. Any of you boys ever hear of a man getting more? Because if you did, I'll raise the ante. Eh?"

"That's the record, far as I know," said Bill Stone slowly.

"Guess I'll raise it twenty thousand, to make sure. This wedding is costing me pretty close to a million, boys; but what the hell? Ruth don't get married but once in a lifetime."

Bill looked at him sidewise.

"Going to live in New York, is she?" he asked.

"Absolutely. Nothing else."

"Then you can't ever tell," said Bill wisely. "You're apt to be set back another million in a year or two."

Rudd shook his head severely.

"No, no! Ruth isn't that kind. When she marries a man, she marries him for good."

"In love with this guy, is she?" little Blint asked.

"Absolutely," Rudd declared. "When I told her she was going to marry him, she didn't take to it at first; but I showed her how things lay, and she came around to it in the end. Couldn't help it. Why, this fellow she's going to marry—half Europe's been after him for ten years, and couldn't

land him. The fond mamas wouldn't pay his price. I paid it. I says to him: 'How much?' Not right out, you understand; but he knew what I meant. 'Half a million,' he said, and I told him it would be a million. He's been eating out of my hand ever since. I tell you, boys, there's nothing money can't buy!" He looked out of

J. Badgerly Rudd's new house burst upon them. As they got out, Rudd halted them.

"Now listen, boys," he said. "I'll introduce you all as something or other. You remember, and don't forget who you are. O'Rann, you look like a Westerner. You better call me 'Jim Rudd.' That's what they used to call me out there. Just 'Jim'



MRS. RUDD HAD
DIAMONDS EVERY-
WHERE EXCEPT IN
HER NOSE

the window with an exclamation. "Hell's fire, boys, we're here a'ready!"

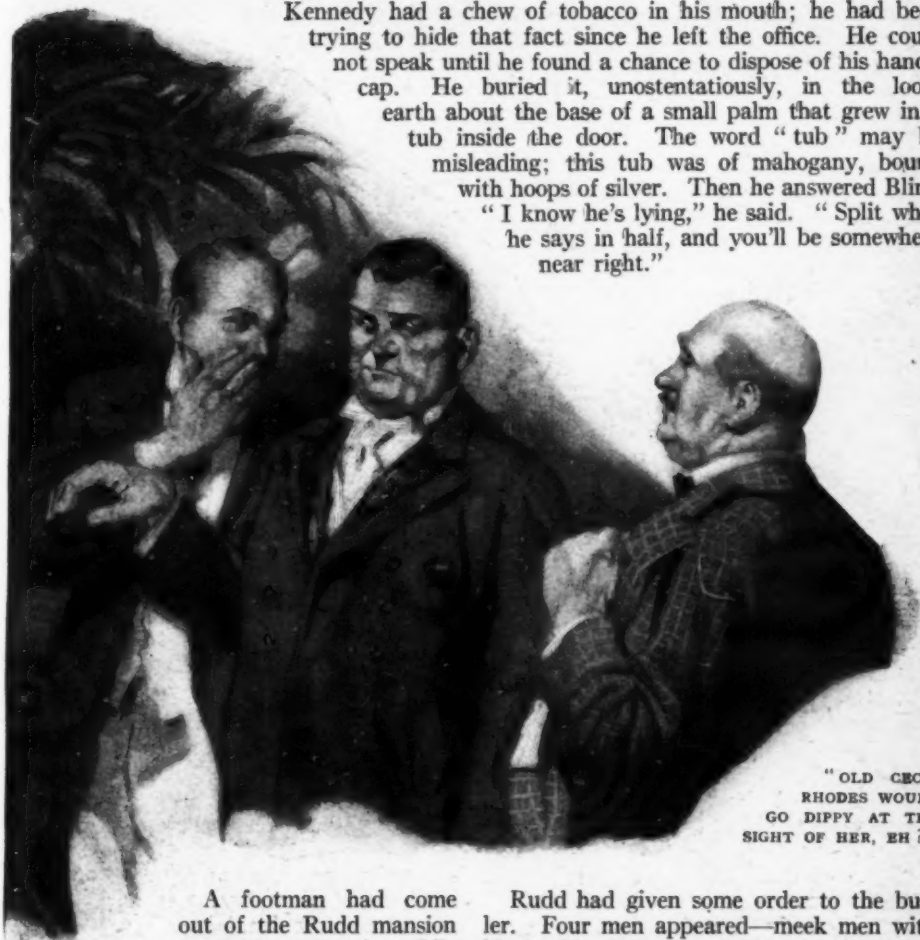
IV

THE limousine purred to a stop beneath the porte-cochère, and the full radiance of

will do. I used to be Jim B. Rudd, but I've been J. Badgerly since I came on here. This gentleman I hired to teach me things says that's the kind of a name to have. My right name's Badger, but he made it Badgerly. It's more elegant. But you call me 'Jim.' Don't forget, boys! Now come along."

Kennedy had a chew of tobacco in his mouth; he had been trying to hide that fact since he left the office. He could not speak until he found a chance to dispose of his handi-cap. He buried it, unostentatiously, in the loose earth about the base of a small palm that grew in a tub inside the door. The word "tub" may be misleading; this tub was of mahogany, bound with hoops of silver. Then he answered Blint.

"I know he's lying," he said. "Split what he says in half, and you'll be somewhere near right."



"OLD CECIL
RHODES WOULD
GO DIPPY AT THE
SIGHT OF HER, EH?"

A footman had come out of the Rudd mansion to stand at attention while they alighted from the car; a statuesque and magnificent butler opened the door for them.

"Highest-priced butler in England," Rudd whispered behind his hand to Blint. "I hired him. Costs me twenty thousand. Worth it. He gives the old dump tone."

The very dimensions of the place had overpowered the four before they got inside; but it was worse inside than out. The reception-hall looked a quarter of a mile long and half as wide.

"I'll need a guide, or I'll get lost in this room!" Bill Stone mumbled to O'Rann.

Men were taking their hats and coats. The place seemed swarming with servants, and Rudd told them, impressively, that his servants alone cost him a hundred thousand a year. Blint thought he was lying, and told Kennedy so.

Rudd had given some order to the butler. Four men appeared—meek men with black side-whiskers. Rudd waved a hand toward them.

"These are your valets, boys," he said. "One for each of you. They'll take your luggage up. Hell's fire! We forgot your luggage! Where is it?"

Bill Stone looked at his men.

"I got a clean collar in my pocket," Blint remarked.

"I didn't have any luggage," Kennedy admitted.

"Here's mine," said O'Rann, pulling a toothbrush from his vest pocket and giving it to one of the valets.

Rudd laughed.

"Hell, that won't do! You've got to have luggage. Here!" He turned to the four valets. "Go and buy some stuff—bags, suit-cases, or something, full of clothes. Charge it to me. I'll be showing my friends around while you're gone."

The valets disappeared like automatons, each measuring his subject with a scientific eye. Rudd took Bill Stone by the arm.

"Come on," he said. "We'll look around. This is what I call swell, boys!"

"I'll hand it to you," said Bill.

"House cost five hundred thousand," Rudd told them. "Decorators soaked me eighty thousand. Furniture and stuff all extra. Best of everything. That's what money does. This is the drawing-room. Here's where Ruth's going to be married. Coming down those stairs, there. Ever see stairs to beat them?"

The detectives never had. The stairs were as wide as one end of the big room, and went up, their impressive width undiminished, to the upper hall. An army might have marched down them in columns of sixteen, shoulder to shoulder. They were of marble, and the rise of each tread was flecked with a pattern in gold-leaf.

"All put in for the wedding, special," Rudd explained. "Going to rip it out afterward. Put in other stairs, smaller. Decorators say I've got to. They didn't want to fix these; but I knew what I wanted. I know what's right. Nothing's too good for Ruth. This wedding of hers—well, say! Now here's the stuff you're going to watch, see?"

They passed through a wide doorway into a room of gold. The walls were solid sheets of gold-leaf.

"Laid on steel, like I told you," Rudd assured them.

He swept a hand at the long tables piled with glittering ware and precious stones and shimmering fabrics. He went from one to another, pointing out the objects of greatest price, and giving their histories. Bill Stone listened phlegmatically. Blint began to fidget with excitement. Kennedy took a fresh chew of tobacco. O'Rann spoke pompously in appreciation.

"Finest collection of wedding-presents the world ever saw," Rudd assured them. "See, here's what you're giving—I got 'em yesterday."

They were surprised; but they held their tongues and bent to read their own names on the cards attached.

"Had the cards engraved an hour ago," said Rudd. "Telephoned Overly and got your names. That wrist-watch is from you, Stone. Cost eight hundred. Blint, the pearl pendant is from you. That was a thousand. O'Rann, you and Kennedy

got together on those gold dewdads. That's a nut service—crackers, and picks, and all. Hand-worked. Cost eighteen hundred. Some class, boys! But that's the way I do things."

"Wonder how many more of these things the old man put up for himself?" O'Rann asked Kennedy, under his breath.

Kennedy shifted his tobacco and looked for a place to spit. There was a tall, gold vase with a narrow neck on the nearest table, and Rudd's back was turned. When his mouth was clear, Kennedy said:

"The whole lot, I shouldn't wonder. Say, bo, wouldn't it pay us to turn crooks ourselves, with this lay?"

"Half of it's fake," O'Rann guessed.

Kennedy shook his head.

"I know this stuff. It's real."

"Come along, boys!" Rudd was calling. "This is the dining-room." And when they had sufficiently admired its wonders, he showed them the conservatory. "Seventy thousand dollars' worth of flowers here right now, growing," he said. "Twenty thousand more coming in the morning, cut special for the occasion. Going to be a park of flowers for the orchestra to hide in. Folks don't want to see the machinery when they hear music, they tell me. Me, I like to watch the guy beat the drum; but that doesn't go, so the musicians will be hidden. Finest orchestra in the country, made up special for me. Been rehearsing two weeks. This is the only time they'll ever play together. Cost me forty thousand, flat."

Back in the vast reception-room, they stopped by the piano, and Blint picked up a heavy gold frame that held a girl's picture.

"Who's this?" he asked.

"That's Ruth," said Rudd, and he beamed.

He had a right to beam. Ruth was as beautiful as she was expensive. Blint studied the picture shrewdly.

"She looks like a girl with sense, too," he whispered to Bill Stone. "And ain't she a queen?"

"Yeah!" said Bill.

"Now that frame," said Rudd, "is my little present to Lord Fitzmay. Of course, it's supposed to come from Ruth. Her picture, in that frame. Look at the diamonds on that, boys! That frame alone cost twenty thousand. The picture of Ruth was made by the highest-priced man in the

country. Cost me twelve hundred. Some picture, eh? Ruth's some girl, too. Here's Fitzmay, framed. I'm giving this to Ruth." He picked up another picture from the farther end of the piano. "Ain't he a gentleman, though? I'll say I can tell them. He's a lord, too—a swell; but there's nothing too good for Ruth. He's worth every cent he's costing me. I'm giving them these things, just as trinkets, on the side. But here, I haven't showed you what I'm giving Ruth besides. She doesn't know. This is a surprise, so keep it dark. Come along!"

He led them to a paneled room, lined with books of assorted colors to match the paneling. There was a wall-safe here; he opened it and drew out a tray. They saw a spread of jewels of ancient, curious patterns.

"Now those, boys—what do you suppose they are? What do you think, now?"

Bill Stone shook his head. Blint wrinkled his nose. O'Rann snorted. Kennedy swallowed hard.

"Them's the jewels Queen Isabel pawned to give Columbus the money to discover America," said Rudd impressively. "I got 'em straight from Spain, guaranteed genuine. Boys, I hate to tell you what they cost. Five hundred thousand, cold. Five hundred thousand, cold! They're not worth a thousand, as gold and stuff, maybe; but I can pay for history, boys, just the same as anything else. There won't be a woman in this country with any more famous jewels than those, boys. Five hundred thousand, cold!"

The butler came in gravely to announce that the valets had returned, that dinner would be served in an hour. Rudd shooed the detectives out of the room before him.

"Go dress, boys," he told them. "Your valets have got the clothes you need. If you want a drink, there's stuff in your rooms, and cigars and cigarettes. You'll find the humidors pretty neat, boys. And there are cases—gold. Keep them, if you like the looks of them. I'll see you at dinner. Now remember, you're gentlemen, all the time—gentlemen! Don't forget, boys! So-long!"

V

THE four split that night into watches, two hours and two hours, turn by turn. Bill Stone and Blint worked together, O'Rann and Kennedy.

The house did not sleep the night through. There was always a distant hum of voices, a stir of preparation. Long before day the staff of caterers began to arrive, and the florist took charge of the lower floor and began to arrange his decorations; but through all the stir of the early hours the four stood their watches, and at ten o'clock they were all on duty together.

Blint was unostentatiously looking over the gifts, reading the cards attached to them, his air dispassionate. The little man was hot and stifling in his long, black coat; but he was unutterably happy. Big Bill Stone lounged near the doorway of the gold-papered, steel-walled room. O'Rann and Kennedy, in the garb they had worn the afternoon before, were talking casually together, twenty feet from where Bill stood. Up-stairs, they could hear the constant scurry of light feet where maids and mistresses passed to and fro. The guests had not yet begun to arrive; the wedding was to be at noon precisely.

A little after ten, Rudd joined them. He had slept from four in the morning till nine. He was fresh-tubbed now, and shaved till he was raw, and his apparel was splendid to behold for the perfection of its fit and the richness of its texture. The black pearl gleamed like an evil eye in his scarf. He was a little above himself; he had started the day with a high-ball, and had taken another, or perhaps two more, after his breakfast.

One by one, he led the four to the dining-room and bade them drink. Bill Stone took ginger ale; he never drank strong stuff while he was on duty. Little Blint drank an enormous high-ball without a grimace. O'Rann demanded and received a Bronx, and then another. Kennedy chose wine. Then Rudd foregathered with them at the door of the treasure-room; and the butler crossed to answer the first summons at the door.

"Here they come, boys!" J. Badgerly explained. "Now remember, you're gentlemen. Act like gentlemen, all the time. That's the idea. Get me? Gentlemen all the time!"

"Sure!" said Blint.

"Yeah!" said Bill Stone.

"Trust us, Mr. Rudd," said O'Rann.

Kennedy merely shifted the tobacco in his mouth to the other cheek.

Then they scattered artistically as the butler admitted one large and ornate wo-



man, one small and humble man, and two middle-sized and Amazonic daughters. A footman took the little man's coat and a maid led the three ladies into a dressing-room behind the library. Rudd was talking loudly to the little man.

THE MAID WAS OF
A DRAMATIC RACE;
SHE ENJOYED THIS
SENSATION

The bell rang again, and another batch of guests entered the reception-hall. The two Amazons and the dowager who had first arrived drifted toward the gift-room. Rudd sidled up to Bill Stone and jerked a thumb toward them.

"Keep your eye on them," he warned the detective. "Husband's Hauser. Made a million out

of dress forms for women. Wife's got a bad eye."

"Yeah!" said Bill.

There was a steady stream of guests by this time; and the four drifted artistically among them, studying them shrewdly, looking hopefully for the familiar countenance of some crook with whom they might foregather. Now and then Rudd worked his way toward them to drop a word in their ears.

"That's Sharp," he would say. "Got a two-million-dollar fee for defending the pork trust in that government suit." Or: "That's Fish, the banker. Never makes a loan at less than ten per cent." Or: "That's Standby, the collar man. Reversible collars, you know. Worth ten million. Laundry men tried to have him killed a month ago." Or: "That's Strington. Got hold of a patent corset that doesn't have to be laced. Made his pile. Going to run for President on the suffrage vote. Every corset he sells now is marked: 'Vote for Strington for President.' Women 'll do it, too!"

And there were others—Halliburton, for one.

"He's the man that puts out silk stockings that won't run," Rudd explained. "I wear 'em myself. They're great stuff!"

Another was Warburton.

"He made a pile in cheap cars," Rudd told them. "Standardized stuff. Thought it would work with everything. Put a million into a standard dress pattern, and lost every cent. Women wouldn't have it. Wanted something special. He's a fool! He can afford to be."

At eleven o'clock the bishop arrived. Rudd met him at the door and escorted him to some retreat in the rear of the mansion. When he came back, he warned Bill Stone to watch the churchman.

"He tried to nick me for money for the heathen, not five minutes ago," he said. "He's likely to walk off with a string of pearls under his apron. Keep your eye on that cove!"

Lord Fitzmay came at half past eleven. He and his best man retired from view. Rudd drifted toward the four again.

"Everybody's here now," he said. "Not a man in the room worth less than a million, this minute," he told them. "Guy that could hold this bunch for ransom could pay the national debt. Some class to this wedding, what, boys?"

"Yeah!" said Bill Stone.

"Sure!" said Blint.

O'Rann pompously declared there was no doubt of it.

Kennedy shifted his tobacco, and adjusted the horseshoe in his tie.

Then everybody gasped, and looked at the head of the broad stairs. J. Badgerly Rudd went forward to meet the vast lady who was descending—Mrs. Rudd.

Blint grinned and whispered to the others:

"Old Cecil Rhodes would go dippy at the sight of her, eh?"

She had diamonds in her hair, in her ears, on her throat, upon her bosom, adown her arms. She had diamonds everywhere except in her nose. A full-rigged diamond queen, no less!

This was at eleven forty-five. It took ten minutes for Mrs. Rudd to receive the greetings of her guests. At the end of that time, she and J. Badgerly took their stand not far from where the four detectives were grouped about the door of the treasure-room. Across from them the altar was prepared. They were near the stair-foot.

"Ruth comes down the stairs with her women, and takes my arm here, and we walk across," J. Badgerly explained. "Get it, boys? This is going to be good! Meet Mrs. J. Badgerly, boys," he added.

The four shook hands with the lady; she bowed to them over her chins.

"Ruth's all dressed," J. Badgerly whispered. "Be down in a minute, now!"

VI

THEN there fell upon them all the little hush that is to be expected upon such occasions. From the hidden orchestra the music flowed out to them, softly at first, but swelling in volume. In a position from which he could watch the stair-head through an arrangement of mirrors, the leader waited for the bride's appearance, to give the signal for the classic marching-song of her husband's clan. The music flowed gently on, wandering sweetly and aimlessly through flower-spangled pastures of melody. The minutes dragged.

There was a great clock by the foot of the stairs; it began to chime. *Ta tum ta tum! Ta tum ta tum! Ta tum ta tum! Tum ta ta tum!*

Another instant's pause; then the slow, booming strokes of twelve began. At the sixth stroke, a door near the altar opened.

At the eighth, the bishop came out and walked sedately to his place. At the tenth, another door swung back. At the twelfth, Lord Fitzmay and his best man came forth, shoulder to shoulder, and wheeled with military precision into position at the bishop's left hand.

"Now!" J. Badgerly whispered over his shoulder.

The great clock was still; the orchestra was vamping till the bride should appear. Every eye was turned up the stairs.

After some thirty seconds, J. Badgerly leaned over toward Bill Stone, grinning with delight.

"She'll keep 'em waiting a minute. She knows how to do things, boys—my Ruth!"

They waited. One of the guests stirred nervously; so did another. Still the stairway was empty, and no bride appeared.

J. Badgerly moved a step forward, to be ready. Hearts beat loud enough to be heard. The orchestra vamped impatiently. The bishop kept oblivious eyes upon his prayer-book, and his lips moved. Lord Fitzmay wet his lips. The best man fumbled in his vest to be sure the ring was there.

No bride! J. Badgerly began to sweat. Mrs. J. Badgerly lost some of her bovine dignity. They whispered together, he and she.

But there—a step in the upper hall, swift and light. The orchestra-leader heard, and swung his baton, and the orchestra softly began "Here Comes the Bride." Then it

stopped in mid career at the baton's frantic warning; for it was not the bride who had appeared. It was a little, black-haired girl in a black uniform, with white apron and cap. Behind her, clustering hysterically, were bridesmaids with white faces.

J. Badgerly took a step up the stairs.

"What the hell?" he boomed.

The maid came down the broad stairs sedately. She was of a dramatic race; she enjoyed this sensation. Her feet kept time to the music. Step by step she descended. There was something in her hand—an envelope; a blue envelope. J. Badgerly climbed another step to meet her.

She handed him the envelope; he ripped it open to read. She turned and ascended the stairs as sedately as she had come.

J. Badgerly read, turned purple, frothed at the mouth, shook his fist, and roared:

"Hell's fire, folks, she's eloped with that damned chauffeur!"

Three minutes later, while J. Badgerly Rudd was steadily working himself nearer the point of murderous insanity, Bill Stone gathered his clan.

"Boys," he said, behind his hand, "boys, let's beat it, before the house is pinched!"

The four gentlemen were of one mind. They did not stop, like the Arabs, to pack up their tents; they silently stole away.

Safely outside, they were no longer silent. The world rang with the mirth of the four.

THE DANCE WHIRLS ON

THE dance whirls on, a maze of fluff and frills.

A kettle-drum invites; a hautboy shrills;

To notes that ripple, twist, and syncopate

A cello pleads that joy must not abate;

A saxophone goes mad; a fiddle thrills.

And all, in haunting dissonance, instils

A madcap mirth within these Jacks and Jills.

Who waits to think of care? Who cares to wait?

The dance whirls on!

A candle gutters low where genius wills

Escape through dreams from fortune's many ills.

The shadows frolic, too—some call them fate—

In crooked streets where prowlers linger late;

Until the fire of dawn all pleasure chills,

The dance whirls on!

Elias Lieberman

Memories of Actors

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF JOHN BROUGHAM, JOHN T. RAYMOND, NAT GOODWIN,
BEERBOHM TREE, AND OTHER FAMOUS FIGURES OF THE ENGLISH-
SPEAKING STAGE DURING THE PAST FIFTY YEARS

By Brander Matthews

Professor of Dramatic Literature in Columbia University

A PLAYGOER from my youth up, a playgoer in Paris and London as well as in New York, I have had the good fortune to be on terms of friendly intimacy with not a few of the leading actors of the past half-century, French and British and American. I have elsewhere set down my memories of Edwin Booth and Henry Irving, Joseph Jefferson and Constant Coquelin, four of the foremost figures in the theater at the end of the nineteenth century. There are a dozen, or perhaps a score, of other players with whom I have foregathered at one time or another, less prominent in their profession, but not for that reason any less attractive in their several ways, and not less companionable.

Most of the actors with whom I have had relation were good company. They had seen many men and many places, and their journeyings had worn off any abrad-ing angularities their personalities may have possessed. They had mixed with all sorts and conditions of men, and had thereby gained the shrewd knowledge of human nature which they needed in their business. They had acquired polish, even if they did not always possess culture. They were often apt in anecdote and quick of wit, with a wide command over words, the result of their acquisition of the sharp and swift dialogue of the stage. In no other calling have I found men quicker to make a joke or to take one, even if it happened to be pointed against themselves.

It is sometimes asserted that actors as a class are inclined to be unduly aware of their own excellence in the quality they profess, and even unduly inclined to communicate to others their own opinion of their own achievements. My experience,

such as it is, does not support this assertion. I have found the men of the stage at least as modest as the men of the studio and the men of the study.

Overswollen vanity is not the exclusive property of any one profession; and I doubt if it is more frequent in actors than in authors or artists. When I comb out my memories, the two most exuberant examples of ingrowing and outflowering self-appreciation that I ever had occasion to observe were both of them physicians, who were also authors, and who were wholly unable to resist the ever present temptation to dilate upon their own triumphs and to confide to all listeners the frequent compliments they had gluttonously accepted.

There was nothing of this sort in Booth or Irving, Jefferson or Coquelin. They were far above it. They were free from self-assertion and even from self-consciousness, although, of course, they could not but be aware of their own outstanding position. In fact, I cannot recall any successful actor of my acquaintance who was abnormally self-centered, or who took himself too seriously.

Sometimes, it is true, I have found an actor who had not yet established his position, and who now and again seized a chance to let me know that he had played this or that important part not unsuccessfully; but this was not boastful self-praise, even if it might so seem to the uninformed listener.^a It was only a supplying of information not otherwise available.

A writer or a painter has no need to call attention to his book or his picture, because these exist and survive to speak for themselves, even if there are only a few who have them in mind. But the work of the

actor has no permanence; it perishes as it comes into being; it instantly ceases to be, except as a memory; and it is as a memory that the actor feels himself called upon to revive it. The difference is that whereas the book of the author or the picture of the artist may be only overlooked, the performance of the actor might be actually unknown if he himself did not put it on record, so to speak.

BROUGHAM AS ACTOR AND PLAYWRIGHT

The first actor whom I came to know was one of the most companionable, the genial John Brougham. In 1869, as a boy, I had been present at the opening and closing nights of his brief management of the little playhouse in Twenty-Fourth Street, behind the Fifth Avenue Hotel—a playhouse which not long after became the Fifth Avenue Theater of Augustin Daly, and which was rebuilt as the Madison Square Theater by Steele Mackaye. At Brougham's I had seen his ever-delightful burlesque, "Pocahontas," in which he himself was the rollicking *King Powhatan*; and I saw also a later burlesque of his, "Much Ado About a Merchant of Venice," in which he was an amusing but rather Hibernian *Shylock*. So it was that when I was elected to the Lotos Club, in the spring of 1871, while I was still an undergraduate at Columbia College, I seized the earliest opportunity to make Brougham's acquaintance. I even played poker half a dozen times that I might meet him in the comparative intimacy of the card-table.

He was not a great actor—that I knew already—although he was a competent performer; but he had a charming personality, and when he chanced to be cast for a character with which his personality coincided, he was entirely satisfactory. Of course he appeared to best advantage in Irish parts, as *The O'Grady* in Boucicault's "Arrah-na-Pogue," *Off-lan-aghan* in Lester Wallack's "Veteran," and, above all, *Sir Lucius O'Trigger* in Sheridan's "Rivals."

I doubt if *Sir Lucius* has been more sympathetically impersonated by any performer of the second half of the nineteenth century than it was by Brougham. I have seen the character undertaken by W. J. Florence and by Nat Goodwin, actors of a far more opulent equipment than Brougham, yet neither of them succeeded so well in bringing out the gentlemanly sim-

plicity of this lovable character. Goodwin was too completely an American of the nineteenth century to be able to assume the part of an Irish gentleman of the eighteenth century; and Florence, excellent as he was in Irish characters of another kind, bestowed on *Sir Lucius* a rather finicky affectation, quite out of keeping with the part.

Fifty years ago it was current gossip that Brougham was the original author of "London Assurance," or, at least, that he had written a play called "Irish Assurance," in which the imperturbable and undaunted *Dazzle* was an Irishman devised for Brougham's own acting. How much truth there may be in this unsupported rumor will probably never be known. I once mustered up courage to ask Brougham as to his exact share in the long-popular play which has always borne Boucicault's name. I distinctly recall his response:

"All I can say is that I have been paid not to claim it!"

Even if the first draft of "London Assurance" may have been Brougham's, the finished comedy, as we all know it, is plainly Boucicault's. It is very like his other five-act comedies, "Old Heads and Young Hearts" and the "Irish Heiress," with their metallic brilliance of dialogue; while it is quite unlike Brougham's plays—"Playing With Fire," for example, with its gentler sentiment.

In those distant days the dramatist was sadly underpaid. Brougham told me once that his price for writing a play for a star was three thousand dollars, payable on delivery of the manuscript—a sum smaller than a month's royalty on a successful play of to-day. And yet more than one of the vehicles Brougham put together for this modest price ran like the "wonderful one-hoss shay." The stage version of the "Old Curiosity Shop," in which Lotta doubled *Little Nell* and the *Marchioness*, must have been performed several hundred times; and only less successful were others of the made-to-order pieces he composed for Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams and for Mr. and Mrs. Florence. These last were congenial labor, since they dealt with Irish themes, more or less in imitation of Boucicault's more solidly built "Arrah-na-Pogue" and "Colleen Bawn."

Where Boucicault was dominating, not to say domineering, Brougham was yielding and unambitious. Their early disagree-

ment over the authorship of "London Assurance" did not prevent their professional association in later years. When "Arrah-na-Pogue" was revived in 1873 at Booth's Theater, Brougham played *The O'Grady*, supporting Boucicault as *Shaun* and Mrs. Boucicault as *Arrah*. In 1879, when Boucicault was strangely ill-advised to undertake *Louis XI* in his own adaptation of the play which Casimir Delavigne had made out of "Quentin Durward," Brougham was *Coitier*; and I can testify that on this occasion the honors were divided, or at least the laughs. I never listened to any dialogue more ludicrous than that between a French king with a pronounced Irish accent and a French physician with an equally persistent brogue.

Brougham had his full share of Irish wit, more spontaneous than Boucicault's and less likely to be borrowed. He had also the more English delight in punning. In "Pocahontas," after the opening song, *Powhatan* thanks his attendant braves:

Well roared, my jolly Tuscaroras!
Most loyal corps, your king encores your chorus.

And in the same burlesque, when *John Smith* is tied down and about to be put to death, *Pocahontas* rushes in, crying:

For my husband I scream!

Whereupon the endangered hero raises his head and inquires:

Lemon or vanilla?

These be but airy trifles floating like bubbles atop the dark wave of forgetfulness, which has engulfed many things more precious. An airy trifle, also, is Brougham's remark when Pat Hearn, a once notorious gambler, drove past the Ocean House at Newport one summer afternoon with a very pretty woman by his side.

"Isn't that Pat Hearn and his wife?" somebody asked.

"He is Hearn, I know," Brougham replied; "but I can't say whether or not she is hisn."

A FAMOUS AMERICAN COMEDIAN

It was also at the Lotos that I got to know John T. Raymond. This was probably in the fall of 1874, when he was appearing as *Colonel Sellers* in "The Gilded Age," a good part in a pretty poor piece. Mark Twain had little skill as a playwright. The plot was disjointed and lop-

sided, the serious and the comic characters were juxtaposed in haphazard fashion. Farce on the edge of burlesque jostled melodrama on the verge of tragedy. The machinery of the story was constantly creaking, and seemed frequently about to break down; and yet, despite all its awkward inexpertness, the seriocomic drama had a vitality of its own—or, at least, it had the vitality of *Colonel Sellers*, as this exuberantly hopeful personality was projected boldly by Raymond.

The actor and the author quarreled after a while—quarreled bitterly, and never made up their quarrel. Years after Raymond had died, Mark wrote an autobiography, which he did not intend to have published until after his own death; and in this he carried beyond the grave his resentment against the comedian who had been triumphantly successful in his misbegotten nondescript of a play, and who had managed, nevertheless, to offend his delicate susceptibilities. Mark told how he came to create the imperishable character of *Colonel Mulberry Sellers*; how he drew it from life with imaginative fidelity; and how Raymond was able to present the character only superficially, being incapable of penetrating to the heart of it, because half of the real *Sellers* was above Raymond's level:

That half was made up of qualities of which Raymond was wholly destitute.

Mark probably knew his own creature better than any one else, and certainly he knew it better than the rather shallow Raymond; but to thousands of spectators, who had not and could not have the author's intimate understanding of *Colonel Sellers*, the actor's impersonation seemed to be everything that could be desired. Raymond gave us all the external characteristics, at least, of the inspired visionary with his inexpugnable optimism, always about to acquire wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, and yet for the moment reduced to a frugal dinner of turnips and water, with only a candle to light up his modest stove.

Even if Raymond failed to express all that there was in the lovable old man, he made him a living reality, to be paralleled in almost every community in this hopeful land of ours. He told me more than once that in town after town he had had a man come up to him and with obvious pride de-

clare that he—this casual stranger, unknown to the actor, and perhaps equally unknown to the author—was the original from whom the character had been drawn.

"Didn't Mark ever tell you? He took *Sellers* from me!"

I have an impression that the cause of the breach with Mark was Raymond's unwillingness to forego two or three easy effects which were always rewarded with thoughtless laughter, but which were not really in keeping with the character. Raymond was unduly inclined to skylark, even on the stage. I have seen him, in the last act of "*The Gilded Age*," match silver dollars with a friend he had recognized in the audience. Of course, he chose a moment for the flip of his coin when the attention of the spectators was bestowed upon some other performer, and only a few of them detected his inexcusable pantomime. These lapses from the standard of propriety may not have been frequent, but they occurred far too often; and they could not but be offensive to the author of the play in which the actor was appearing.

When Raymond indulged in tricks of this sort, he displayed a lack of respect alike for his audience and for his art. The art had to suffer in silence, but the audience might at any time be moved to protest. I recall that when Raymond was playing *Ichabod Crane*, in 1879, he sent me a box, to which my wife invited three or four of her young friends. In the last act *Ichabod* comes out into the garden to ask *Katrina* into the house, where there was merry-making. To the startled astonishment of our party, Raymond said:

"Come on in, *Katrina*! There's lots of fun! Brander Matthews has brought a whole boxful of pretty girls!"

None the less was Raymond an accomplished comedian, brisk, lively, laughter-compelling, and authoritative. Like many another comic actor, he longed to play pathetic parts; and unlike most of those who have this ambition, he possessed the power of drawing tears.

I had first seen him as *Asa Trenchard* in Paris, during the exposition of 1867, when Sothorn had ventured across the Channel to disclose *Lord Dundreary* to the unresponsive French; and I have never forgotten the simple and manly pathos of the scene in which *Asa* burns the will leaving him the fortune which would otherwise go to the girl he is in love with. Audiences

are always ready to appreciate a brief pathetic episode, when the comic character unexpectedly turns his serious side to the spectators; but they are resentful when the funny man whom they have gone to laugh with, and even to laugh at, is presented in a play wherein he is persistently pathetic and not even intermittently humorous. Raymond lost money for himself and for his managers when he impersonated a dreary sob-seeker in a dull domestic drama, "*My Son*," derived from a tearful Teutonic tale of wo.

In collaboration with H. C. Bunner I put together a rather boisterous farce called "*Touch and Go*," which Raymond liked enough to contract to produce, but not enough for him ever to set about its production. In its place he brought out in succession two plays in which the fun was less acrobatic—"In Paradise" and "For Congress."

After these pieces had run their course, George H. Jessop, who was a part author of "*In Paradise*," came to me with an idea for a comic drama for Raymond, and asked me to join him in working it out. It was to be called "*A Gold-Mine*"; and having in mind Raymond's *Asa Trenchard* in "*The American Cousin*," I suggested that we should lay the scene in London, so as to repeat the contrast of an American with the British. We also decided to develop our plot so that at the end of the second of our three acts Raymond should have a chance to be pathetic, if only for a brief moment.

When our play was read to Raymond, he was delighted with it. The character suited him, and he rejoiced that he was to have an opportunity to show that he could be serious when the situation required it. During his annual tour he tried out our comedy in one of the smaller Western cities on a Friday night. He sent us a glowing report of the reception of our play, and of his own triumph at the end of the second act. Less than a fortnight thereafter we read in the morning paper that he had had a sudden seizure which had carried him off within twenty-four hours.

Fortunately for the authors, thus unexpectedly bereft of the actor for whom the piece had been composed, and to whose personality it had been adjusted, Miss Helen Tracy, who had played the heroine in the single performance which Raymond had given, wrote at once to Nat Goodwin,

advising him to secure our play, as it had made a hit, and as she thought the star part would just suit him. Goodwin asked us to let him read the piece. He liked it, and we soon came to terms with him, both Jessop and I believing that he was an actor of promise, although up to that time he had never undertaken a part demanding any delicacy of treatment or any veracity of characterization.

NAT GOODWIN'S EARLY CAREER

When he was a very young man, Goodwin had made his first appearance in a variety show, giving imitations of actors then prominent. It is a curious fact that even the most adroit mimics are rarely able to become accomplished actors, competent to sustain a character consistently throughout a play. Goodwin was one of the few exceptions to this rule. He soon gave up mimicry for burlesque, succeeding that fine comedian William H. Crane in the chief comic part of the perennially popular "Evangeline," and playing it in careful imitation of his predecessor. Joseph Jefferson—who often appeared in burlesque early in his career, notably in a parody of "Mazeppa"—once said to me:

"Burlesque is a good school for a young comedian, as it tends to give him breadth of effect and certainty of execution."

From burlesque Goodwin progressed to farce. When he came to us for "A Gold-Mine," he was playing the part of a drunken undertaker in "Turned Up," a robustious piece of British manufacture. As the attraction of this whirlwind farcicality was not exhausted, Goodwin arranged with us to postpone our play for a year; and he utilized the delay to prepare the public to accept him in a comedy of a more refined type. He added to his bill the ingenious and whimsical piece called "Lend Me Five Shillings," which Jefferson was still acting occasionally.

"I'd sooner finish third to Jefferson than run a dead heat with Dixey!" he said to me—Dixey having recently made a great hit in "Adonis."

Goodwin also appealed to us to modify the entrance of *Silas K. Woolcott*, the American who had gone to England to sell a gold-mine.

"That entrance is all right in itself," he explained; "and it was all right for Raymond, because he had played parts of that kind before. But I haven't, and it's too

quiet for me, since they'll be disappointed if I don't make them laugh with my first half-dozen speeches."

So we brought *Woolcott* in through the conservatory, instead of through the front door, and we contrived a very brief episode of equivocation in which Goodwin mistook the butler for a certain *Sir Thomas Butler* whom *Woolcott* had been invited to meet.

"A Gold-Mine" was a more or less artificial comedy with a complicated plot and with lively dialogue as brilliant as the combined wits of the two collaborators could compass. For the part of the fascinating widow with whom *Woolcott* was to pair off at the end of the play, Goodwin engaged Miss Kate Forsythe. The rest of the cast was at least adequate, if not entirely satisfactory. Mr. McCarty, of the Boston Theater, produced the play most judiciously, making a valuable suggestion for heightening the effect of the pathetic speech at the end of the second act. When he asked Goodwin if he was certain that he could play this serious bit and carry the audience along with him, the actor answered modestly:

"Yes—at least I think so. You see, I'm going to do it in imitation of Charley Thorne."

This was shrewd, as Charles R. Thorne, Jr., was an actor of straightforward force with a rich and well-modulated voice. It is always profitable for the novice in any calling to take pattern by its experts. As the painter studies in the studio of another craftsman, and as the writer "plays the sedulous ape to many masters," so the actor can find his profit in imitating and emulating the performances of an earlier generation, not making himself a slave to any one of them, but gaining variety and flexibility by capturing and combining the methods of half a dozen.

John Drew, for example, played one of his earliest parts at Daly's as he imagined it would have been played by Charles Wyndham. Wyndham had modeled himself more or less on Lester Wallack, as Wallack, in his time, had earlier sought to achieve the airy lightness of Charles James Matthews. I make this assertion without misgiving, as my information came directly from these four comedians. I may add that Coquelin, the most varied and versatile actor of the end of the nineteenth century, once told me that while he was taught by Regnier, he learned almost as much by

incessant observation of Samson, an older artist with a method wholly different from Regnier's.

GOODWIN'S GREAT HISTRIONIC TALENT

It was by his performance in "A Gold-Mine" that Goodwin first established his position as an actor of indisputable promise; and in the remaining thirty years of his life, he gained in power and in authority. "In Mizzoura" was written for him by Augustus Thomas, on purpose to display the more serious quality the actor had exhibited in "A Gold-Mine." It was this more serious quality, strengthened by exercise, which enabled him to rise to the noble dignity of the final episode in Clyde Fitch's "Nathan Hale"—a tragic character which Goodwin portrayed with beautiful fidelity.

He became one of the foremost figures on our stage. He even adventured himself in two Shakespearian parts, *Shylock* and *Bottom*, in neither of which was he considered to have been entirely successful; and yet, despite his prosperity in the theater, he never attained to the commanding position to which his native endowment would have entitled him, if only it had been sagely administered.

In fact, Goodwin, so it seems to me, threw away a golden opportunity. After the retirement of Edwin Booth, Lawrence Barrett, and John McCullough, there was an opening for an ambitious actor to win recognition as their worthy successor; and this was an altitude to which Goodwin could have aspired, if he had not been deficient in that intangible and indefinable quality which we call character, and which is really more important than ability for success in life.

Ability he had in abundance, but he did not husband it. He did not take life seriously enough; and therefore his art suffered and failed to mature as it might have done. He dissipated his ardor and wasted his strength in default of the implacable ambition which compels self-control. Nature had bestowed on him a richer gift than on Lawrence Barrett, who had made himself what he was by stern determination, whereby he overcame his disadvantages. Goodwin had more intensity, more power, more resources than Barrett; and he might have earned a name for himself as *Shylock*, *Richard III*, and *Iago*.

But it was not to be, and he made ship-

wreck of his career. I failed to see him when he attempted *Shylock*, for which he ought to have had the fire and the passion, though he lacked the training that he might easily have attained if he had forced himself to acquire it. I did see him in "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; and although my memories of George L. Fox and of James Lewis as *Bottom* are still vivid, they are not as gratifying as my recollection of Goodwin in the same part.

This revival of Shakespeare's most fanciful and most humorous comedy failed to attract the public, and the blame was currently laid upon Goodwin. To my mind this was unjust, since his rendering of the part seemed to me excellent, firmer in outline and richer in color than that of either Fox or Lewis. I can never forget the delicious self-sufficiency of his performance in "Pyramus and Thisbe," his exuberant vanity, his adroit suggestion of the eternal complacency of the self-satisfied amateur.

I may be wrong, of course. I may be crediting Goodwin with more than he possessed, as I am certainly ascribing to him more than he ever displayed; but I think he had it in him to do finer and stronger things than he ever aimed at. "The pity of it, *Iago*, the pity of it!"

THE CAREER OF BEERBOHM TREE

It would be difficult to find two careers in sharper contrast than those of Nat Goodwin in the United States and of Beerbohm Tree in Great Britain.

As there was a vacancy at the head of the profession in America after the withdrawal of Booth and Barrett and McCullough, so there was one in England after the decline and disappearance of Henry Irving. Goodwin was unable to seize the occasion, even if he saw it; Tree saw it and seized it. Although nature had been niggardly to Tree where she had been bountiful to Goodwin, Tree had the inestimable advantage of a resolute will and of the innate power which impels a man to master the many difficulties besetting his path in life. It was by sheer force of character, rather than by assured skill as an actor, that Tree forged to the front and took his place as the leader of the profession in the British Isles, catching the mantle of Irving as it fell and wearing it as best he could.

When I first knew Tree, he had recently graduated from comic opera to farce, making his earliest hit in "The Private Sec-

retary," and replacing Arthur Cecil in "The Magistrate." From farce he turned to melodrama, and advanced his reputation as an actor by the versatility he displayed in "Called Back" and "The Red Lamp." For two reasons this versatility was more apparent than real—in the first place, because the methods of farce and of melodrama are closely akin; in the second place, because the differentiation of the parts Tree was then playing was largely external, being mainly a matter of make-up, which incompletely disguised his own rather thin and brittle manner.

In time he assumed the management of the Haymarket Theater, and still later he was able to build the spacious and sumptuous His Majesty's. At the Haymarket he produced more than one interesting modern comedy and made more than one interesting revival, notably of W. S. Gilbert's ever-delightful "Engaged." At His Majesty's he was soon forced—somewhat to his surprise, as his half-brother, Max Beerbohm, once told me—to abandon both comedy and farce, simply because the house was too large for any form of drama demanding delicacy. He found himself compelled to rely on the more strenuous types of drama, which permitted elaborate spectacular adornment. He brought out the "Herod" of Stephen Phillips, and imported "The Darling of the Gods" of Belasco and Long. Thus it was that both necessity and his lofty ambition led him to a series of elaborately pictorial revivals of Shakespeare's tragedies, histories, and comedies.

As a producer he continued the tradition of Irving, bestowing upon Shakespeare's plays superb settings, rivaling Irving's in their splendor, their expensiveness, and their taste. For "Twelfth Night," for example, he designed an Italian garden, rising terrace upon terrace to the very back of the stage, a scene so exquisitely beautiful in itself, so completely satisfying to the eye, that—so Sir Martin Conway told me—some spectators felt it to be an intrusion when the actors entered and distracted attention from the lovely vision.

Tree displayed his scenic dexterity and his artistic invention in a dozen or a score of other Shakespearian plays, notably "Antony and Cleopatra," produced while Queen Victoria was still upon the throne. There is an anecdote which is doubtless familiar to many, but which I feel I have

no right to omit here, to the effect that as the amorous adventures of the serpent of old Nile were unrolled before the entranced audience, one British matron whispered to another British matron:

"How different from the happy home life of our dear queen!"

Of course Tree reserved for himself all the great Shakespearian characters, tragic and comic—*Mark Antony*, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, *Falstaff* and *Malvolio*. For the loftier tragic parts he lacked the physique and the temperament. He had not the beauty of person, the grace of gesture, the princely bearing, the appealing voice, which the performer of *Hamlet* ought to possess. He had not the power, the passion, the largeness, needed for *Macbeth*. He had not the elocutionary skill required for the proper impersonation of *Mark Antony* in "Julius Caesar." But he was intelligent, untiring, strong-willed, and self-willed; and he was able to get the British public to accept him in these unsuitable parts, perhaps in some measure because there was then no actor on the British stage who could contest its chieftainship with him.

It is reported that Gilbert said to him, after seeing his *Hamlet*:

"Very good, Tree, very good indeed! You were funny without being vulgar."

And when Gilbert went around to Tree's dressing-room after his exhausting performance of another of Shakespeare's tragic characters, a performance which had left the actor weakened and perspiring, the pitiless wit remarked:

"Tree, how well your skin acts!"

Although Tree took himself seriously, he had a keen sense of humor; and even if he winced under the satiric lash of Gilbert, he could take the joke without offense. In fact, his sense of humor often came to his rescue, as another anecdote testifies.

He was once acting *Hamlet* in the provinces when his friend, John Hare, happened to be in the same town. He sent Hare a box; and the unwilling Hare felt that as a fellow-manager he could not refuse this more or less unwelcome invitation. Hare sat in the box in solitary state; and after the curtain fell, he was about to escape, when Tree's secretary caught him at the door with a request that he would come to supper. Again the kindly Hare felt that courtesy demanded his acceptance.

At table Hare did not mention "Hamlet," nor did Tree. As soon as he could,

Hare bade his host good night. Tree saw him to the door, and they parted without a word about the performance. Before Hare had gone half a dozen paces, however, Tree called him back. As Hare returned sadly, Tree said with a smile:

"I say, Johnny, it is a good *play*, isn't it?"

We may be sure that Tree appreciated the merry jest of his half-brother when at last he attained the honor of knighthood, the final reward of every British actor-manager. As usual, the announcement preceded by several days the actual ceremony; and in the interval a friend asked Max Beerbohm as to the actor's exact status during this awkward intermission.

"Is your brother a knight now, or isn't he?"

Max answered that he supposed his brother in the eye of the law was still Mr. Tree; "but," he added, "he is Sir Herbert in the sight of God!"

TREE'S SHAKESPEARIAN REVIVALS

Tree's disqualifications for the mighty characters in Shakespeare's tragic plays were obvious, but his histrionic limitations were less apparent in the chief characters of the comedies. I did not see him in "Twelfth Night," but I should conjecture that he gave a not unsatisfactory interpretation of *Malvolio*, although it probably lacked the gentle dignity and the melancholy humor which Irving bestowed upon the part. I did see his *Falstaff* in "The Merry Wives of Windsor," and it seemed to me altogether the best of his Shakespearian experiments. After all, the "Merry Wives" is only farce, brisk and bustling; and Tree was experienced and skilful in farce, with no objection to getting all the laughs that the lively situations might authorize.

Yet, as I watched his dexterous effects, I was conscious always that Tree's *Falstaff* was not really fat. He might be padded out to his proper proportions, but he did not move like a creature of portly figure, and his humor was devoid of unction. He disclosed himself as a clever thin man trying to pass himself off as a humorous fat man.

In his latter performances of *Falstaff* he yielded more and more to his besetting temptation to overdecorate a character with petty ingenuities and finicky details, which came in time to detract from its

broad outlines. He had an inventive mind, and he was continually in search of novelties of gesture and of business. Even in his tragic parts he was prone to obtrusive pettinesses. Often at the end of the run of a play, and sometimes even at the beginning, he seemed to act outside the character rather than inside it.

Yet, when all is said, it remains that Tree deserved well of the playgoing public of London, which could not well help being grateful for the many opportunities he had provided for it to behold Shakespeare's plays, always beautifully and tastefully mounted. It was accustomed to his mannerisms, and it knew what to expect when it flocked to His Majesty's Theater.

In the United States, Tree was never able to establish a position comparable with that which he held in Great Britain. On our side of the Atlantic he was only a wandering star; he was not the manager of the foremost theater with the credit of a score of Shakespearian revivals. We Americans had not become habituated to his defects, and therefore we could not be expected to be as tolerant of them as were his British followers.

He was well aware of this atmosphere of indifference, so to speak, in America—an atmosphere he could never dispel. When I saw him last in London, ten or fifteen years ago, he told me that he was thinking of crossing over again.

"But you don't like my acting in New York," he added sadly; and I could not honestly contradict him, as perhaps he hoped that I should.

Where the performances of Shakespeare's plays at His Majesty's were sometimes insufficient was in the acting; and this was not Tree's fault, for he was always eager to strengthen his cast by the engagement of the best actors available. At more than one of his revivals of "The Merry Wives of Windsor," he persuaded Miss Ellen Terry and Mrs. Kendal to emerge from retirement to disport themselves as the joyous dames who delight in befooling *Falstaff*. The fault lay in the fact that fine performers were not to be had. Actors good in Shakespearian parts have always been scarce; and they are now steadily becoming scarcer.

OTHER STARS AND THEIR COMPANIES

Even fifty years ago, when Edwin Booth opened the stately theater he had built for

himself, there arose a loud outcry against the mediocrity of his company—an outcry which always rankled in Booth's memory. A score of years later he explained to me that he thought the complaint, even if justified, was unjust to him, since he had secured as well-equipped a company as it was then possible to collect, with Edwin Adams and Mark Smith at the head of it.

This came back to my memory when Henry Irving, a little later, spoke to me about the difficulty he had had in getting fit performers for *Laertes*, *Mercutio*, and the other important parts of youthful buoyancy, all composed by Shakespeare for the same energetic and lively actor at the Globe Theater.

"I engaged Forbes-Robertson, George Alexander, and William Terriss, one after another, and I tried to tempt them to stay with me," Irving told me; "but they preferred to set up for themselves. I don't blame them, of course; but now it is almost impossible for me to find anybody whom I can trust with their important parts."

It was sometimes meanly suggested that Booth and Irving were unwilling, and perhaps even afraid, to surround themselves with first-class actors. The suggestion is as absurd as it is unworthy; and it is plainly contradicted by the record. In the sixties of the last century, when Booth was consolidating his reputation by the earliest hundred-night run of "Hamlet" that any actor had ever achieved, Bogumil Dawison came to New York; and the young American promptly invited the German tragedian to play *Othello* to his own *Iago*. More than a score of years later Booth again appeared as *Iago* to the *Othello* of Salvini. At one time or another he also joined forces with Charlotte Cushman and with Helena Modjeska.

Henry Irving was equally free from petty jealousy. He always treated Miss Ellen Terry as a co-star; and when he engaged Mrs. Sterling for the *Nurse* in "Romeo and Juliet," he advertised her name as prominently as Miss Terry's and his own. No actor ever displayed more generosity to a friendly rival than Irving did when he invited Booth to come for a fortnight to the Lyceum, to alternate *Iago* and *Othello*.

It was never difficult for Jefferson to find competent actors to support him as *Rip Van Winkle*; and he always rehearsed

the piece carefully, to make sure of the needful unity of tone. But it was very hard indeed to find performers of presence, of authority, and of the sweep of style required by the boldly contrasted and highly colored characters of a rich old comedy like "The Rivals." At one time or another Jefferson secured the companionship of Mrs. Drew, of John Gilbert, and of William J. Florence, gladly sharing his glory with them.

He was absolutely delighted with the brief tour of "The Rivals," when a galaxy of stars deserted their orbits to twinkle by the side of his *Bob Acres*. Mrs. Drew was *Mrs. Malaprop*, Julia Marlowe was *Lydia Languish*, Robert Taber was *Captain Absolute*, Nat Goodwin was *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*, Francis Wilson was *Fag*, and William H. Crane was *Sir Anthony Absolute*. Here was truly an all-star cast; and the combination was triumphantly prosperous. I saw it at the sole performance in New York—a *matinée*, at that; and it was perhaps the best all-around rendering of "The Rivals" that I have ever seen, although several of those who took part in it, accustomed to the more modern methods of our latter-day dramatists, were not quite at ease in their efforts to catch the tone of artificial comedy.

It is true, alas, that there are actors—and some of them are expert and accomplished performers—who, when they rise to be stars, not only seek to grasp all the good things for themselves and to monopolize the spot-light, but who even go so far as to begrudge any laughter or applause that may be evoked by the members of their companies. Forty years ago one of the most prominent comedians on our stage had this pitiable characteristic. At the first performance of a play specially written for him, this star was standing in the wings, waiting his turn to go on. Suddenly there was a roar of laughter and a round of applause.

"Who's that?" cried the star. "What did he say?"

And at the second performance the line which had been applauded was cut out.

Twenty years ago there was an American comic actress of robust force and wide popularity who slowly lost the favor of the public because she insisted on producing plays in which she never left the stage, and for which she engaged actors and actresses who were feeble and colorless. On the

other hand, there are some stars who are almost self-effacing, and who do not even care whether or not they have their full share of the emphatic situations upon which the curtain falls. It was pointed out by not a few of those who saw "Leah Kleschna," when Mrs. Fiske produced it with a brilliant and well-balanced cast—John Mason, George Arliss, Charles Cartwright, William B. Mack—that the star let Mack "have the curtain" of the third act.

It is not only natural, it is also wise, for a star to see to it that his part is interest-

ing, and that it holds its interest from the first act to the last. He cannot help knowing that he is the lodestone which attracts the audiences. They pay their money to see him, and they are not getting their money's worth if they do not see enough of him. But the spectators are best pleased with the star himself, they are most likely to hold him in delighted remembrance and to want to see him when next he comes to town, if he has given them a well-balanced play, in which every part is filled by a performer who can get out of it all it is worth.

The Wolf of Twelfth Street

BY ROBERT SHANNON

Illustrated by Gerald Leake

HE was a clerk in an instalment furniture-store, and he enjoyed the delusion that he was an authority on the nebulous underworld of Kansas City. His greatest pleasure of an evening was to saunter along Twelfth Street, which is a sort of Middle Western Broadway, and pretend to himself that he was a sinister figure. His age was twenty-three, and his name was Grover Triddle.

By day, life was a hollow mockery to Grover Triddle. His nature sagged under the weight of distasteful employment. The acrid odor of fresh varnish was ever in his nostrils, and he came in for an intolerable amount of badgering from customers who seemed to believe he had the authority to reduce prices, which he had not.

But by night Triddle was the Wolf of Twelfth Street. It was an appellation he had secretly devised to embrace what he liked to think were the hidden traits of his real self. Once he had shed the gray shoddy of daylight for the luminous cape of the night, a personality entirely unsuspected by his employers sprang into being. He saw himself as a dangerous person—a soul-seared, silent man, disillusioned as to life, yet capable of flashing in a second from his hard reserve into swift and vicious action.

Had mothers snatched their young to bosom upon encountering him in the dusk

of the evening, he would have understood and appreciated it. Such, however, is the irony of life that youngsters prattled at his heels and pretty shop-girls smiled at him. There was a green immaturity about him. He knew it, he hated it, and he tried to conceal it.

On Saturday night he dressed with extreme care and tilted his soft gray hat to an angle that indicated the proper spice of villainy. No jewelry adorned his person. He was all restraint—black tie, blue serge suit, plain white shirt. A man so garbed might move in any situation without attracting undue attention.

Eastward from the bluff overlooking the manufacturing district, Twelfth Street was blazing with the incandescent dazzlement of a promising night—a glowing, saffron slash of glamorous energy that ran through the girth of the city like a belt of fire.

To Triddle the street always promised something alluring and exciting, which it never quite delivered. Often he felt that he was on the verge of some undefined adventure, but always it eluded him. Nevertheless, he pursued his will-of-the-wisp relentlessly, stalking it night after night in the vain hope of finding the nameless something which was somehow bound up with his wolfishness.

This night, however, was different. He found himself upon the most glittering corner, waiting. To-night was the night! A thrilling urge was upon him; a certainty, germinated he knew not where, that something was about to happen. Too long had his yearnings and his imagination clothed the bare skeleton of reality in the dress of romance, only to find it still but a rack of dry bones.

With a nice regard for the fine points of adventure, Triddle lit a black cigar and stood erect, expectation tingling in his bosom.

For six nights a week Twelfth Street is crowded, but on Saturday nights it is a swirling jam. Trolley-cars from Argentine and Rosedale and sundry other unfashionable localities disgorge massed humanity. From the boarding-houses and rooming-houses of what years ago was Quality Hill, they stroll out by the thousands.

As a class they are young and small-salaried, but the street is not altogether so innocent as the youth and the light-hearted babble of its multitude seem to indicate. A sharp eye can detect an occasional face that bespeaks the world of prey; a woman with too much rouge, a man stamped as a public enemy by every intangible mark of Ishmael.

A three-block section, westerly from Main, is definitely sporting. Martin Carrigan, who once gave the light-weight champion a good fight, conducts what is ostensibly a cigar-store. Martin himself is seldom present; his sleek-haired clerk looks after his hand-book. In the same block, Tommy Vance, who used to pitch for Detroit, operates his pool-hall, which is seldom raided now since Tommy has decreed that no money shall be laid on the tables.

Two burlesque houses, farther along, battle from opposite sides of the street with flaming arcs and huge multicolored roof-signs. Bediamonded gentlemen move about with bulky dignity; waspish young men, resplendent in trick tailoring, their checkered caps cocked jauntily, thread devious paths through the swarm. A half-breed Cherokee, up from Oklahoma with his monthly oil royalty in his pocket, turns into the Golden Pheasant, a pretentious Chinese restaurant, with a little blonde on his arm. Cal Morton, the gambler, drives along in his red roadster, nodding pleasantly to his friends. Scrap-Iron Farman scans every passing face, hoping to recognize an

old acquaintance who, as he knows, will give him the battle of his life the instant they meet. Farman is a plain-clothes man who loves his work.

Triddle, as already stated, was in a receptive state of mind; but after a time it grew a bit monotonous standing on the corner, and he decided to head into the throng and range toward the east. The great moment, however, had arrived.

A taxicab stopped in front of him and a grinning face in the window called:

"Hey, Triddle—come here!"

II

It was the irresponsible, scatter-brained Sid Fletcher, who covered hotels and theaters for the *Morning Times*. At this point it may be well to state that this narrative does not deal with newspaper life. Sid was but a light-hearted instrument in the stern hand of destiny.

As Triddle pushed his way to the machine, the young reporter alighted, bringing with him a slight, dark-haired girl.

"Mr. Triddle!" he said hurriedly, by way of introduction. "This is my cousin, Miss Whitsett. She's up from Oak Grove, visiting her aunt."

Triddle lifted his hat.

"Listen, old top!" Fletcher spoke with nervous haste. "I got to dig along. Got a tip on a whale of a yarn. I was going to show Dorothy the town to-night, but I got wind of something big—understand?"

"But, Sidney," the girl protested, "I can go back."

"Now listen—Triddle here will take you around and show you what makes everything buzz. Won't you, Triddle? Sure!"

"Anything to please the ladies," said Triddle.

"But, Sidney—"

The brisk young man was already back in the machine.

"All right, Joe," he told the driver; and with an airy tip of his hat he smiled an encouraging farewell as the taxi rolled away.

Triddle gave quick appraisal to the young woman who had been placed in his care. Her intangible air of simplicity, almost of helplessness, intrigued him. It was, although he did not know it, the inception of the miracle.

"If that isn't just like Sidney!" she exclaimed. "I'm awfully sorry, Mr. Triddle; I really couldn't stop him."

Well, Triddle was a wolf, and he had to live up to his character. A cold smile met her protestations.

"That's all right, girly!"

The "girly" alarmed her, and there was no reassurance in the hard, calculating face beside her. Triddle was markedly different from the young men she had known at the University of Missouri and in her sleepy, respectable home town. Involuntarily, she caught one hand up to her mouth.

"I think I had better get on a street-car and ride out to where I'm staying. I don't want to impose upon you."

"Nothin' doin'!" Triddle slid an authoritative hand under her arm, and drew her along with him. "That cousin stuff on the level?"

"Why, certainly—" with injured surprise. "You don't suppose that I—"

"Never can tell. Anything's liable to happen here on Twelfth Street. I've seen many a funny thing in my day. Not much gets by me!"

It was his purpose to impress her with his sophistication, and he succeeded.

"If you'll put me on a street-car, I'm sure I can find the place again—if you'll lend me the fare. I came out without any money."

"Nix! Nix!"

"But I'd much rather go back."

She was unable to conceal her nervousness; the uneasy note in her voice, the little shiver of the arm in Triddle's hand betrayed it. Her apprehension caused new happiness to surge within him. At last some one felt that he was more than a harmless furniture clerk. A girl, and a charming one, had sensed his deep, dark character. Ah, it was wine!

"Everything's all right!" He bent down to her height to speak. "Don't be afraid of me. When you're in my company, you're as safe as if you were at home in bed. Sid Fletcher's my friend." Pausing for emphasis, he repeated: "Sid Fletcher's my friend, and Grover Triddle never betrays a friend—whatever else they may say about him."

Dorothy Whitsett recalled with another shudder the stories that had drifted back to her home of violent crimes in Kansas City—murders, robberies, and sensational abductions. Even the man's assertion of friendship with Sidney had a strange sound. That her cousin was acquainted with Triddle,

somewhat casually, it is true, but well enough to know that he was innocuous, would have reassured her, had she known it; but she didn't.

"I—I think I'll walk back alone," she announced. "It isn't far."

Her guardian frowned and guided her into a doorway.

"Listen, little sister—I don't know what Sid's game is; I don't know what your game is, but we're goin' through with it. I don't know what's up, but you'll have to trust me."

Something hard and cruel nudged Triddle in the ribs. It was a policeman's stick. The man on the other end evidently did not know whom he was addressing.

"Youse 'll have to move along," he said gruffly. "No loiterin' along here. Keep movin'!"

They moved hastily. The surly snarls that came from the tightly drawn mouth of the Wolf were for her ears alone.

"I'll get him, don't worry! I'll have him trampin' a beat out in the sticks next week!"

"But where are we going?" she asked.

"That depends," he snapped.

They walked a block without further verbal exchange until they came to a wide-fronted restaurant with "Let's Eat Here" done in white enameled letters across two sections of plate glass.

Twelfth Street has a penchant for restaurants with sanitary white table-tops and counters. The food is usually good and the prices are low. Hence they have a steady patronage at all hours—especially the Let's Eat Here, which has come in late years to be a populous resort for the flashy and the shoddy, indiscriminately, of the ever-shifting part of the population that has no home other than hotels, boarding-houses, and furnished rooms. The brilliancy of its lighting seems to exercise a magnetic attraction upon the passer-by. The manager is affable and smiling, and, altogether, Twelfth Street finds it a congenial place in which to linger over its coffee-cups and listen to the music of a large phonograph, which is always in operation.

"Some joint here!" Triddle told the girl as he steered her into the restaurant.

"I don't think I care for anything to eat right now," she objected.

"It 'll give us a chance to sit down and size up the situation," he told her mysteriously, as he led her to a small table for

two against the wall. "From here we can see everybody that comes in and goes out."

III

THERE was something about Miss Whitsett's manner of protesting and then sur-

The girls he knew held no charm for him; but Dorothy Whitsett was not like those girls. There was a subtle reserve about her, instead of the bold aggressiveness with which he was familiar. A gentleness in her speech and manner stimu-



"TRIDDLE
HERE
WILL TAKE
YOU AROUND
AND SHOW YOU WHAT
MAKES EVERYTHING BUZZ.
WON'T YOU, TRIDDLE? SURE!"

rendering to his stronger will and knowledge of the world that warmed Triddle immensely. It made him feel at his best, his surest, his calmest.

He realized that she came from a stratum of society above his own, but not necessarily superior to it. Occasionally he had touched—very lightly, of course—the fringe of that upper circle. Sidney Fletcher belonged to it, but Sidney was an innocent lamb. Because of their aloofness from the life which he found so alluring, Triddle felt a sort of mild contempt for the ignorance of his acquaintances.

lated him and brought him in closer touch with the almost rascallion nature he fancied was his.

He had no desire to feign that he was one of her kind. On the contrary, he wished her to understand how thoroughly he was coated in black. She was one of the benighted beings who knew nothing at first hand of the world of crime. Even her cousin, the reporter, had scarcely an ink-

ling of it. Triddle proposed to open up a new and fascinating aspect of life to her.

Most of his disclosures, of course, would be based on imagination; but he was not above interlarding his revelations with a picturesque lie or two. The drab, colorless facts of life were not what counted, anyway; it was the broad vista viewed through the glittering gate of romance.

Gradually he had realized that she was an inspiration, a challenge. He could startle and shock her with his cynical philosophy; and she would learn, fine-textured as she was, that he, too, had a background of intellectuality.

In their few minutes of disjointed conversation she had stirred up from his depths something which he fancied exceedingly. Beneath his surface iniquity she should see that there was a touch of the sad dog, the fallen angel, the inscrutable, unfathomable mind of a man who has the eyes to see and the brain to appreciate the vast cosmic procession. Triddle loved to think of himself in that light.

Lacking the real tastes of a Villon or an *Artagnan*, he had painted in his mind, as weak people sometimes do, an idealized portrait of himself. He had never attempted to be in reality what he was in his fancy. A rakish tilt to his soft hat, a tired, knowing expression of the eye, a mysterious smile—that was all.

"You'll get a flash of the real night life here," he told her when they were seated.

Despite a pronounced feeling that Mr. Triddle was an off-color person, Dorothy Whitsett was conscious of a pleasurable thrill of anticipation. A furtive study of his countenance had somewhat relieved her first apprehension.

"You said that as if it was terribly wicked here," she ventured with a little smile.

"It is wicked—believe me, it is! Over your scare?"

"Why, what made you think I was frightened?"

"Sure you were," he remarked nonchalantly. "I get all that stuff. You see, I'm a student of human nature. You didn't know exactly what you were up against at first, did you?"

"No—what am I up against?"

There was a naive quality in her query that gave poignant charm to the situation, which was the most exhilarating Triddle had ever experienced.

"If you came into this place alone—" He waved his hand eloquently. "But don't be afraid—you're with *me*. You'll have something to tell the folks, all right, when you go home. Lucky you met me!"

"Yes?"

A tinge of color came to his face at her smile.

"I'm not boastin'; I'm tellin' you the truth. I suppose I got a more intimate acquaintance with night life and the underworld than anybody else in town. You see"—he leaned forward confidentially—"I get the inside on all the under workin's, the low down on everything, the wheels within wheels—"

A highly starched waitress interrupted Triddle. Upon his recommendation the girl ordered pie and milk.

"As I was sayin'," Triddle went on impressively, "I'm on the inside track of pretty near everything that goes on around here. If I was to tell all I know—but wait a while; I'll point out some birds that are tough mugs, believe me!"

The words fell now from the corner of his mouth. Dorothy glanced around, but failed to detect any one of alarming mien.

"Are the people here really so bad?"

"Are they bad? Listen, lady! You know how a light draws bugs at night? How all kinds of black and green and red things fly against the glass with a click? You can bet your life that things that fly around at night are bad. Anything that's good—man, animal, or insect—likes the daytime and the sunshine best. Of course, the light draws the good and the bad alike; but it draws the bad more, and often it draws out the bad in reasonably good people. Lots of good people get pulled into these night lights, and then the bad ones get them."

He shrugged his shoulders and smiled wisely.

"But why don't the good people in the light help one another?" Dorothy queried.

"They do—sometimes. Oh, you'll find all kinds here. The light draws 'em. That's why this restaurant is so bright—why the whole street is so bright. The reason the people that own it light it up so much is because they want the money that's in the other fellow's pocket. Ever think of that before?"

"No, I don't think so."

"Well, I have, lots of times. I'm always figurin' these things out."

He stopped speaking and let his gaze rest on a man and a woman who were placidly eating ham and eggs.

"See that fat guy two tables over—the one that's got the dame in the red hat?"

"You mean the man with the jowls?"

"That's him."

"He looks like our ice man at home."

In reality the man with the jowls was a plumber, and the red-hatted lady was his wife. Triddle had picked them out at random; he had never seen them before.

"That bird is—" With lowered lids and a significant sidewise glance at the adjoining table, he continued in a lower tone: "Can't tell you now. That man at the next table is trying to hear."

Instinctively the girl lowered her voice.

"Be careful!" she warned.

Triddle nodded.

"You never can tell who you're sitting next to."

"Are you sure this is a safe place?"

"No, it ain't—for most people. With me it's different. They all know me, because I got a way of gettin' next to 'em—all kinds. You see, I'm at home with any class of people. To-night you might see me walkin' down the street with one of these here hard-boiled crooks—see? And maybe to-morrow night I'd be out with a big politician, or perhaps a millionaire. I take 'em as they come."

IV

DOROTHY repressed a tendency to smile. By degrees Triddle was revealing more of himself, and in a different light than he thought. Whatever his deficiencies might have been, she felt that, at least, life would never be prosaic to him.

"I should think it would be dangerous," she remarked, "to associate with so many sinful people."

"Danger, my dear girl, is somethin' I never think about. When a man's time comes, it comes, and that's all there is to it." Moved by some hidden sorrow, he breathed a deep sigh. "It wouldn't matter much anyway."

It was a speech that pleased Triddle. Surely she must feel that it was a fatalist and a philosopher she was conversing with—a reckless adventurer, well worth any woman's time to save, if she could.

"Why do you associate with these people?" she asked. "Aren't you interested in other kinds of people, too?"

"You mean society? No, I don't care for it"—with a shrug. "Those butterflies don't get a man like me. We don't speak the same language."

At any rate he was different. Dorothy decided to feel him out a bit farther.

"Of course, I don't suppose you really are—but from some of the things you've said, I thought—I mean, I wondered if you yourself are—well, anything that's contrary to law?"

It was the most flattering compliment Triddle had ever received. Before answering, he waited a moment to enjoy it. Then he permitted a cloud to pass over his face.

"Suppose I was?"

"But you aren't?"

"Suppose I was? Suppose I told you they called me the Wolf of Twelfth Street? Suppose I told you I had a shady past? Just consider it a minute; just suppose I admitted I'd been mixed up in some pretty rough affairs—shootin' and things like that? Would you be sittin' here eatin' pie and drinkin' milk with me? In other words, would it make any difference to you, so long as you know my heart is as good as gold?"

All the virtue inherent in Dorothy's nature flared up.

"Indeed it would!" she replied, so sharply that Triddle felt as if he had been drenched with cold water.

"Well, I'm not a crook," he admitted, a bit crestfallen.

"I sincerely hope you are not."

"I ain't an angel, either," he added hastily, anxious to correct any impression she might have received that he was thoroughly respectable. "I'm what you might call a man of the world. If you want to understand life, you've got to study it from the bottom; and that means you've got to be able to take care of yourself."

Dorothy's attention wandered from him, to watch some of the other diners. An increasing clatter of china and silverware on uncovered tables brought a realization that the place was filling up. A couple entering drew her notice—a sun-browned man with sharp, graven features, accompanied by a young and pretty girl. It was the girl, with her cheap, countrified clothes, who interested Dorothy.

Triddle, following her gaze, saw them, too, as they advanced with a bit of self-consciousness. It was obvious that they were not of the city breed.

"Country people," he informed Dorothy, with a smile. "Come up to look over the big town, by gosh!"

The man who had sat at the adjoining table—the one whom Triddle had accused of eavesdropping—was just leaving. Like a puzzle picture being slowly fitted together, the strangers came and took the vacant table.

"I think the girl is rather nice-looking," Dorothy whispered with kindly interest. "Rather a weak face, though. Tell me, please, Mr. Triddle, what do you think of the man? Does he look cruel to you?"

The sophisticated one shook his head.

"No," he said.

"Most likely he's her husband, or

caping on a horse, he had reached the Wichita Mountains, where he hid for six months.

Finally, he was surprised, taken, and sentenced to life imprisonment in the State penitentiary. Thirty days later he clubbed a guard to death, crawled a quarter of a



"THAT BIRD IS— CAN'T TELL YOU NOW. THE MAN AT THE NEXT TABLE IS TRYING TO HEAR"

maybe her older brother. No, he ain't a bad one. He's been workin' out in the sun. The real bad eggs don't do that."

But Triddle was wrong. The man was Harvey La Trace, with a five-thousand-dollar reward on his head. The major crimes charged against him were murder, train-robbery, and bank-robbery. The minor ones included jail-breaking, larceny, and assault with intent to kill.

At Delphi, Texas, after robbing a bank, La Trace had shot his way through a posse and escaped. Single-handed, he had held up a train near Ardmore, Oklahoma; had killed the engineer, wounded the fireman, and compelled the Pullman passengers to surrender their money and valuables. Es-

caping on a horse, he had reached the Wichita Mountains, where he hid for six months. Finally, he was surprised, taken, and sentenced to life imprisonment in the State penitentiary. Thirty days later he clubbed a guard to death, crawled a quarter of a mile through a sewer-pipe, and escaped. Still later, he robbed the Farmers' and Merchants' Bank at Thermopylae, Kansas, shooting and killing the cashier. He was captured at Joplin, Missouri, after a drunken debauch, extradited, and once more sentenced to life imprisonment, this time in the Kansas penitentiary at Lansing. Before he was removed from the county jail at Thermopylae, however, he succeeded in strangling a guard who brought him food, and escaped. As was his custom, he immediately held up another bank, and got away with more than four thousand dollars in Federal Reserve notes.

A streak of cunning that warned him of his own weakness kept him away from all cities for a time. For two months he worked as a day laborer on the farm of John Keller, near Clay Center, Kansas.

The work did him good, physically. His muscles became taut and hard, and the sun scorched the jail pallor from his face; but labor had no effect upon the uncontrollable evil in his nature. That merely slumbered for a time.

The smooth, solid flesh of John Keller's daughter Hazel piqued his desire, as his appetite would have been tempted by a ripe peach. La Trace, when he wished, could be an attractive fellow. He knew how to listen, he knew the power of suggestion, and there was in him a latent power of personality.

During his period of labor he had been planning the riotous excitement of a sojourn in Kansas City with Hazel Keller. He knew, of course, that the police were on the watch for him; that photographs had made his face familiar to every detective, and that there were perhaps a dozen men in the city who knew him by sight. All of which swayed him not at all. There is a streak in the genuine criminal that is stronger than wisdom, a seething torment which periodically nullifies the hard lessons of experience and the insistent promptings of instinct.

At the end of his two months on the farm, Hazel Keller told him she would follow him to the end of the earth. Hitherto, with a cat-like cunning, he had held her aloof. When he was ready to leave, he spoke his first impassioned words, and she begged him to take her along. It would be an elopement to the city, he said; marriage as soon as they arrived; a week's honeymoon; and then a return home, for he purposed to rent a farm in the neighborhood.

They had arrived in the city late in the afternoon, and that evening, La Trace told her, they would be married. So far, he was playing the honest lover.

V

"I DON'T think you are as good a judge of character as you think yourself," Dorothy said to Triddle. "That man is not a farmer. He gives me a creepy feeling."

Wide in his own conceit, the larger part of Triddle, which was furniture clerk, was not attuned to the subtle currents that play upon the shadowy senses of women, who know without knowing why they know.

"Somebody 'll lift his wallet before midnight," he predicted. "There's men on Twelfth Street that could take the teeth out of his head without him knowin' it."

Dorothy was not convinced. Suddenly she leaned over.

"Look!" she whispered. "That girl's in trouble!"

Triddle saw it, too, after his attention had been called. Tears glistened in the eyes of the farm girl, and her lips were moving nervously. The man was talking to her in an undertone. Although his words were inaudible, it seemed that he was trying to console her, to quiet her.

One of his prehensile brown hands slid across the table and closed tightly around the girl's. He was looking into her eyes with hypnotic intensity, and the seductive murmur of his voice seemed to relieve her. From somewhere she produced a handkerchief, with which she dabbed at her eyes, and tried to smile. For an instant she stifled her emotion, and then, with startling unexpectedness, she burst into a half-hysterical ejaculation.

"Oh, I'm afraid!" she cried. "Won't you please take me back? I want to go home!"

All the heartache that a girl who stood on the verge of the great mistake could feel welled in her voice. In the back part of the restaurant the phonograph was blaring out noisy jazz. The china and silverware were rattling, and from a near-by table a burst of laughter went up. Triddle and Dorothy Whitsett were the only ones who heard her.

"We've got to do something about it," Dorothy told Triddle. "You know all about these things."

A little tremulous feeling that began in the pit of his stomach and spread irresistibly throughout his body set the hands of the Wolf of Twelfth Street to trembling as they lay on the table in front of him. It was fear! The sun-browned man looked like steel and elastic. He was talking to the girl again.

She was slowly gaining control of herself. Presently she smiled wanly. Her companion leaned back in his chair, lit a cigarette, and exhaled a puff of smoke, as if in relief.

"You'll have to do something. He's talked her into it again!"

"I don't think we'd better interfere," Triddle said, with an effort at deliberation. "It seems to be a private matter."

The level brown eyes opposite him seemed to be peering right into his soul. He tried to look away, but they compelled

his gaze to return. He knew that she knew!

"You're afraid," she said calmly.

VI

Now fear is a tremendously potent thing, yet there are things that can overcome it, such as pain and hunger and the desire for sleep. There is also a type of person in whom vanity is stronger than fear.

Triddle rose slowly to his feet.

"Just a minute," he said to his accuser.

A long stride took him to La Trace's table. He dropped one hand softly on the desperado's shoulder.

"My friend—" he began in a queer, high-pitched voice.

La Trace lifted his head very slowly until his flinty eyes encountered Triddle's. He had looked death in the face more times than the callow boy above him had fingers and toes. He had risked his freedom, and possibly his life, to engage in this particular job of iniquity. The pupils of his eyes contracted to little black points.

"Brother," he said quietly, but there was a vibrant threat in his voice like the flat whirr of a rattlesnake—"keep away from me!"

It was enough. Triddle dropped back into his chair, wiping a shaking hand across his chalky face. It is a wise furniture-clerk who knows his limitations.

"I heard what he said," Dorothy told him, after he had gulped a drink of water. "Of course, there is nothing more for you to do—nothing more you *can* do—but I am going to get her away from that man. I'm going to talk to him myself!"

Triddle got hold of himself with a struggle.

"Let's get out of here," he whispered. "I saw his eyes. He'd murder you as quick as he would me—in a holy minute!"

A scornful laugh burst from the girl's lips.

"Romantic to the last!" she sneered.

Pretense could go no further; she despised him for his cowardice.

For a pregnant moment they looked straight at each other, until some little heroic spark hidden in the pith of the callow clerk's being began to glow and flame. The warmth of it was slowly, surely banishing the chill of terror. It brought color back to his face and it loosened his tongue.

"I know now why I met you!" he said,



WHAT FOL-
LOWED IN
THE NEXT
CONFUSED
INSTANT WAS,
OF COURSE,
INEVITABLE

a new ring in his voice.

"I could have loved you, and you could have loved me; but that doesn't matter. You don't have to worry any more about that little girl. Just wait where you are."

He rose to his feet with something approximating grace. Some inward impulse had twisted his lips into a devilish, fearless smile. During a space of time measurable by

the second-hand of a watch, he was, in fact, the man he had long fancied himself to be.

The spring of a wolf is no more swift than the attack he launched. One



LA TRACE MADE NO EFFORT
TO FIGHT WITH HIS FISTS.
HIS SWIFT HAND FOUND THE
HOLSTER UNDER HIS COAT

hand clutched La Trace's shoulder, another had his throat. Superhuman strength swung the bandit half-way around and tore him out of his chair.

What followed in the next confused instant was, of course, inevitable. Taken utterly by surprise, La Trace made no effort

to fight with his fists. Though almost forced off his feet, his swift hand found the holster under his coat, high up near the left breast. The nasty spit of his automatic sent Triddle reeling and twisting away from him.

Truly, the bandit was a man of steel and elastic. With incredible rapidity he vaulted the counter at the far side of the room, plunged through the swinging doors of the kitchen, and was gone.

Triddle retained consciousness for one sweet moment. His blurred vision sought out Dorothy Whitsett, and a devilish smile formed on his foolish waxen lips.

"When a man's time comes—"

VII

As he opened his eyes, Triddle became aware that some one in a stiff white apron was bathing his forehead with a wet napkin. It was the waitress who had served his table. Some one else was pushing back the crowd around him and calling:

"Give him air! Give him air!"

He attempted to speak, and found that after all he was alive.

"What happened?"

The waitress grinned with relief.

"Some guy parted your hair for you, kid—that's all. He just slid a little streak of lead through the willows. Believe me, it was a close call, all right; but you had it comin' to you—jumpin' on a perfectly peaceable stranger. You was lookin' for it, and you got it."

Triddle sat up on the floor, his eyes roving the excited spectators.

"Where," he asked weakly, "is my lady friend?"

"Ditched you," the waitress told him, with feminine brutality. "When the quick-action hick beaned you, she takes the little dame that was with him by the hand, and the two of 'em walks right out of the place together."

For a little while there was an unwonted whirl of excitement in the Let's Eat Here, but it soon died down again. Within an hour the restaurant had emptied itself, and a fresh crowd was sitting at the white-topped tables. Outside, the lights of Twelfth Street gleamed in unabated brilliance. The throng moved east and west, restlessly and aimlessly. Down in the freight-yard, Harvey La Trace swung himself up between two slowly moving cars, southward bound.

Triddle paused for a few minutes to enjoy the glamour of the night life from one of the giddy street corners. Then, because he had a splitting headache, he went home an hour earlier than usual and went to bed. To-morrow there was to be a big sale on golden oak dining-room furniture.

A THANKSGIVING FOR WOMAN

LET us give thanks to woman—she that bore us

With joy and pain so mystically blent,

Nor ceased for all our sinning to adore us—

Nurse, comrade, rainbow, all the way we went.

Man is not so—he wearies in a while;

But woman treads with us the blackest mile.

Her beauty is the dream of all our doing,

Her love the laurel of our proudest day;

Beyond the utmost goal of our pursuing,

She the hid cause for which we work and pray.

'Tis woman's hand that, unseen, feeds the flame

Burning upon the altar heights of fame.

Saving her pity, where shall man find healing?

For else the world is as a frozen wind.

Man's heart is closed against his own appealing;

'Tis only woman's business to be kind.

Justice, with equal scales, man gave to man;

Mercy was woman's gift to the great plan.

Mysterious sister of the stars in heaven,

Close confidante of the long cosmic scheme,

In our terrestrial clay the vital leaven,

Woman, at once the dreamer and the dream!

To woman thanks and benedicate,

World without end, and evermore to be!

Richard Le Gallienne

Billy Kane—White and Unmarried*

A ROMANCE OF THE PARISIAN UNDERWORLD

By John D. Swain

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE E. WOLFE

X

A BATTERED old taxi-auto sped along the Boulevard Rochechouart at the hour of twilight that same day. Despite its decrepit looks, an expert would have heard with approval the organ-like note of its sweet engine. It could have passed with ease any of the luxurious cars which at this hour were bearing to their homes the industrious rich. Kane had directed little Victor to produce a chauffeur who could be relied upon, for a price, to go anywhere and ask no questions.

The man whom in a surprisingly short time he brought to the Café Royal, where Kane awaited them, did not inspire anything like a warm glow of confidence. He had a hard-boiled look, wore a green patch over one empty eye-socket, and was as squat and hairy as a gorilla—a resemblance heightened by the ape-like swiftness of his salute as he touched his greasy cap with a thick and very dirty forefinger.

Victor swore by the name of a name of a sacred pipe that François would, if properly paid, drive them to hell and not even comment on the temperature. There was nothing to do but to take him, and, with the boy as interpreter, Kane directed him where to go.

Victor was as uneasy as if the lumpy cushions were red hot. To-night was the climax of his youthful dreams. Kane had been averse to fetching him along; but it was vital to have some one who could speak the language in which he only groped. And Victor, crossing and recross-

ing himself and taking terrible and mouth-filling oaths, had readily promised absolute obedience.

As always when he had cast the die, Kane was as indifferent as one of the grenadine-sipping idlers who watched the traffic from the hundreds of little café tables they passed. His face was almost inane as he lounged at ease, an amused eye upon his small companion's wriggling body and eloquent hands and eyebrows.

He wore a dark blue serge suit, with flannel shirt of the same color, dark cap, and rubber-soled shoes. Nowhere about him was there anything that could show gleaming white or sparkling ornament. In one coat pocket reposed the faithful automatic, with an extra clip of cartridges; in another a small but powerful flash-light, and, as an afterthought, a heavy knuckleduster made to slip over his left hand.

If no emotion showed in his face, deep content abode in his heart. It was like old times, this setting forth with the tools of his trade, to turn a neat trick all on his own!

The reward he had in view was greater than any he had ever played for; the danger at least as great. Because he had so easily put Chicoq away that time, he did not in the least underrate the Apache's cunning and courage. The police, too, would hardly sanction Kane's notions of private enterprise. It was a lone hand, where it was necessary not merely to win, but also to avoid publicity.

The flimsy car, forced onward by its tremendous engine under guidance of the sin-

* Copyright, 1920, by John D. Swain—This story began in the December (1920) number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

ister François, continued from the Boulevard Rochechouart into the Boulevard de la Chapelle, past the Gare du Nord, and at the Custom-House swung down the Boulevard de la Villette, with the picturesque Buttes Chaumont on their left. Lamps were being lighted as they swerved sharply to the left into the Rue de Belleville, and by the time they passed out through the old Porte de Romainville, and headed for the village of that name, it was growing dark.

As explained by Dorothea, it was in an old farmstead on the outskirts of the village, near Pré St. Gervais, that Chicoq and Maréchal had hidden Andrée. The house was known as the Chouard farm. Beyond this, Kane could learn nothing. It was upon Victor that he relied for more definite directions.

Obedying orders, their chauffeur drew up a little short of the square of Romainville, on a side street; and Victor scrambled out to investigate.

He returned in about fifteen minutes. He had posed as one seeking relatives who lived, so he had said, "out near the old Chouard farm." His hearers—street loafers, a pork butcher, a peasant woman with a brace of live ducks under her arms—could not, of course, tell him anything concerning his mythical relatives, for whom he had chosen a very unlikely name; but they readily described the Chouard house, empty for a long time past, but for the last few days occupied by "foreigners" from the city.

The taxi-auto resumed its journey, now wholly under the direction of Victor.

"Remember, kid, not too near," warned Kane. "They'd get wise *pronto* if a strange car stopped within sight or sound. I'll hoof it the last quarter."

They slowed down now, feeling their way along country lanes which it was difficult to believe were hardly out of sound of the roar of Paris. The houses were farther apart now, and little vineyards, orchards, and gardens, cultivated to the last leaf, separated them. They met a number of people—young folks arm in arm or roosting on the walls, old peasants clattering home from market, the village *curé*, his flapping black *soutane* scarce visible in the dusk. But as they drew out of Romainville and toward Pré St. Gervais, the roads were deserted, and there were long stretches between the houses.

Two or three times they drew up, and Victor descended to scout about for landmarks. On his last trip he reported the Chouard farm about five minutes' walk ahead.

"Close enough!" grunted Kane.

He oversaw François park his car beside the road, beneath a clump of poplars, with all lights extinguished. Then he made a final inventory of his slender equipment, finding all in order. He retied his shoe-strings—a little thing like a loose shoe-lace may mean a twenty-year stretch!—and finally removed his coat and laid it on the seat in the tonneau.

"Tell François to wait here, whatever he sees or hears," he ordered.

Victor did so in a torrent of passionate argot; and a moment later Kane was following the little *chasseur* up the dark road.

The old Chouard farm, with its wretched half-acre of market-garden last worked by the stepmother of Maréchal, differed from its neighbors only in its state of ruin. Built strongly of stone, it presented a fairly creditable appearance from the outside, its closed wooden shutters concealing a plentiful lack of glass, its rotten thatch the home of many wind-blown seedlings, whose gay blossoms won the admiring comment of passing tourists. A stone wall surrounded it, but the gate had long since gone for fuel.

A hundred yards from the entrance, a large oak-tree shaded the road with its low-flung branches; and in their obscurity Kane bade the unwilling Victor remain.

"I may send Andrée out ahead of me," he explained. "It is necessary that some one should await her, to conduct her to the car. If she comes, take her there as fast as she can run. Wait ten minutes for me—or until you see Chicoq or his men in pursuit—and then return to Paris as fast as that devil of a François can go."

Victor wriggled uneasily.

"But you, *monsieur*?"

"If I'm not here ten minutes after Andrée, I sha'n't come at all. Do as I tell you, or I shall be sorry I brought you. I have trusted you a good deal for a boy. Show me!"

Victor muttered disconsolately, but betook himself to the shadows under the oak-tree. Kane moved up the road alone.

Reconnoitering a house was nothing new to him. Dozens of times he had done it, but never under just such circumstances.

The occupants, for one thing, would be to some extent on the lookout. They could not know that their hiding-place had been discovered, but as lawbreakers they were always furtive, apprehensive, ready for trouble. A watch of some sort would be kept.

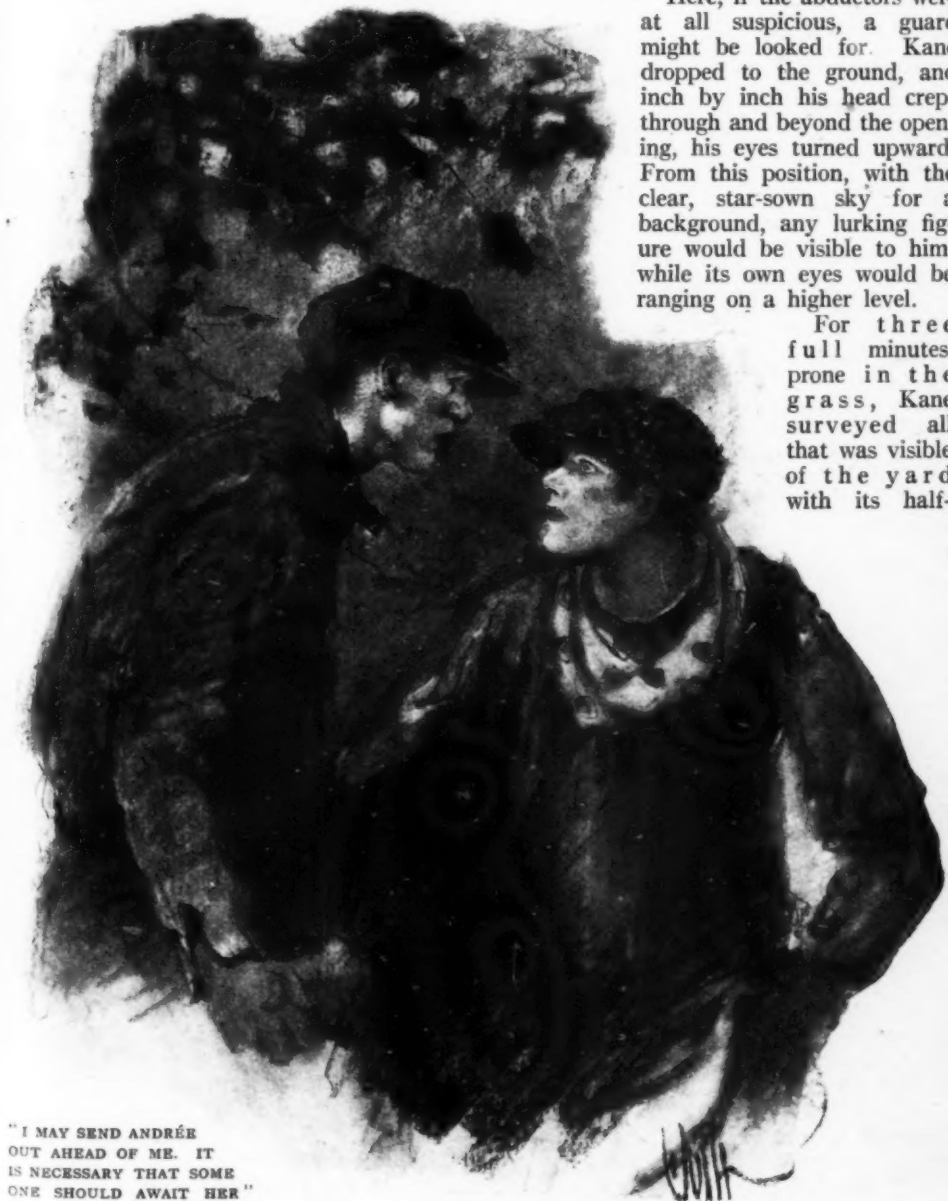
Kane's eyes, already beginning to regain something of their old power of nocturnal vision, scanned every possible lurking-place

for an outpost. As a result, he was a long time in covering the stretch of road from the oak-tree to the corner of the stone wall which bounded the house.

Step by step he moved round this wall, pausing at each corner to assure himself that nobody was lying in wait for him with swift knife or heavy club. At length he came to the gaping entrance where the old gate had once stood.

Here, if the abductors were at all suspicious, a guard might be looked for. Kane dropped to the ground, and inch by inch his head crept through and beyond the opening, his eyes turned upward. From this position, with the clear, star-sown sky for a background, any lurking figure would be visible to him, while its own eyes would be ranging on a higher level.

For three full minutes, prone in the grass, Kane surveyed all that was visible of the yard with its half-



"I MAY SEND ANDRÉE
OUT AHEAD OF ME. IT
IS NECESSARY THAT SOME
ONE SHOULD AWAIT HER"

dozen stunted trees, and the façade of the house. Light sifted from chinks in the wooden shutters, and the murmuring of at least two voices came to him.

At the end of his survey he rose and slipped inside, clinging to the wall, and following it round until he stood at the rear, behind the cow-shed, which formed an ell. There was nobody in the shed, no breathing creature, nor any in the yard. In their fancied seclusion, the Apaches were all within doors.

This was a point gained! Still, Kane was on the outside of a building containing an upknown number of armed desperadoes, and he was an unauthorized agent acting entirely on his own risk.

His instinct brought him at length beneath a small, dark window at the rear of the house. It was unshuttered, and his fingers made out that its glass panes were unbroken; also, that it was locked.

Listening intently, and failing to hear any sound within, save the now almost inaudible murmur of the voices from the other side of the house, Kane drew from a pocket a ring set with a diamond solitaire. Firmly, and with only the faintest dry scratching, he cut a little half-moon in the glass directly over the upper middle half of the window.

He next produced a little strip of surgeon's plaster, which he breathed upon and attached to the glass, so that it covered the deep circular groove he had made. A sharp tap with his knuckles, and the moon-shaped segment of glass swung loosely, attached to the rubber tape. Through the opening he inserted thumb and finger, and cautiously turned the catch.

All this was much quicker and easier than raising the window itself. Quite evidently this latter operation had not been done for a long time. The frame was warped, and stuck obstinately. Even to raise it at all was no easy task; and he had to do so with the minimum of noise. Of course, with the beautiful little folding jimmy of duralumin which he had, with other compact and high-speed tools of his craft, dropped into the North River before leaving New York, it would have been easy enough. With his bare hands, it was not.

Much knowledge of the anatomy of windows, coupled with patience and unusual strength, won at length. Kane stood presently upon the stone floor of a damp and empty kitchen.

The room extended the width of the house. It contained an enormous table, some rude chairs, and a great cold fireplace. Not daring to use his flash-light at first, it took him some time to cover it all foot by foot. Not until he had done so did he venture, holding the flash-light extended far to one side, to snap it on. Its beams added nothing to his information. Many cobwebs, some old battered stew-pans hanging on the wall, shelves containing broken crockery—nothing else.

He pocketed his light, and moved toward the door which led to the front of the house.

To his immense relief, it was unlocked. He had straightened out and filed down a button-hook in his room at the hotel, fashioning a rudely effective skeleton key; but a glance at the immense iron lock on the thick plank before him showed how futile this would have been against the fabrication of some departed village smith.

With little difficulty he turned the latch and slipped through. He left the door ajar, that it and his forced window might form an emergency line of retreat. He even returned and placed some of the heavy chairs directly in front of the door, to form a temporary obstacle to any pursuers rushing after him from the lighted room, and certain to blunder into the chairs in the dark. He fixed their position in his own mind; then, for the first time slipping the brass knuckles over his left hand, and with the little automatic in his right, he returned to the hall, to that part of the house which contained the object of his visit.

Standing there, he rapidly scanned the layout.

Evidently there were but two rooms on the ground floor. From the one in front, through a half-opened door, the voices he had before heard indistinctly were now plainly audible. He could make out only an occasional word, however, since the talk was in that Apache jargon which is comprehensible to few Parisians.

As before, there seemed to be two men speaking. He caught his own name once or twice; but—and the blood raced in his steady arteries—there was now in addition an occasional phrase, more like a broken sob than words, from a woman, and the voice was Andrée's!

Leading up from the hall at the end of which he stood was a short flight of stairs.

He very much wished that he might explore this upper region, to learn if it were tenanted, and by whom. Kane detested leaving any loose ends. Engaged below, in the front room, as he soon would be, he did not wish his attention divided by the possibility of reinforcements down that stairway.

It was hardly to be expected that he could steal past the door undetected, but he proposed to try. If he failed, it would merely precipitate the climax. Not a sound came from above; but for all he knew, there might be three or four of Chicoq's assassins asleep up there. Silent as a cat on his rubber soles, he began to edge down the dimly lighted hall.

Could he have understood the conversation taking place in the front room, he would have been greatly intrigued. Chicoq sat in there with Andrée and two of his tribe. Enraged at the girl's steadfast scorn of himself, the hatred which always glowed in her eyes when he was in her presence, he was consumed by the desire to hurt her. He could have done that in a physical sense easily enough, at any time; but he was cunning enough to realize that there were keener weapons in his armory.

While Kane stood almost within arm's reach of the door, the Apache leader, seated before Andrée, his hot breath in her face, was telling her in great detail of the manner in which he had made away with him!

Because his hatred was so living a thing that he only awaited opportunity to do exactly what he chose to say he had already done, he was able to make his account exceedingly realistic. He almost convinced himself, as he thrust toward the trembling girl the razor-keen knife which he swore he had turned in the American's cursed entrails.

Andrée believed him. She knew Chicoq had done this sort of thing before, and she could not see how a lone foreigner, however brave and resourceful, could escape Apache vengeance in its own jungle.

On either side, smoking mostly in silence, save as one man from time to time corroborated Chicoq in some horrible detail, sat two others, only less repulsive objects than their leader.

At the very instant when, hatred giving way to horror in her eyes, Andrée lifted them in anguish to the sooty ceiling of her

prison, convinced that her lover—she called him that in her heart—was slain, she beheld, framed in the partly opened doorway, a pale and mask-like duplicate of his fondly recalled features.

Under such circumstances, it is small wonder that she believed that she gazed upon his apparition, and that her lips parted to utter a terrified scream. That none came was because her throat was literally paralyzed with fear; but her expression was as eloquent as any scream.

Chicoq and his two cutthroats wheeled as one and beheld Kane standing in the doorway, automatic in hand.

"Stick 'em up!" he barked.

The words were not familiar, but their meaning was. Three pairs of hands shot heavenward.

XI

WITH that strategic stairway in the back of his mind, Kane stepped inside the room, half turning so that he could catch from the tail of his eye any descending figure. Without looking at the girl, he spoke rapidly to her.

"Quick now, Andrée! Go out by the front door, leaving it open behind you. Hurry down the road toward Romainville. Victor is watching for you. He will take you to safety. I'll follow at once!"

For an instant she hesitated. It seemed to her that her legs must crumple like lead-foil were she to rise.

"Hurry," he repeated, "unless you want me to be murdered!"

Andrée leaped from her chair, her strength restored by his words. Girls bred on the steep slopes of Montmartre do not easily faint, nor are they lacking in courage and quick wit. She did not utter a word, but sped past him, her eyes devouring his face.

Not for an instant did Kane's eyes leave the three Apaches. The noseless one, his features more inhuman than ever in his fury, was still too self-possessed to invite certain death. Poised on the balls of his feet, he awaited the slightest opening, the least incaution on the American's part.

Andrée brushed past him, through the doorway, and down the hall. Already her hand was reaching for the latch, when the luck that had borne Kane company suddenly deserted him. Another and invisible hand lifted the wrought-iron hasp, and the heavy door swung open from without, forc-

ing Andrée to step back. Maréchal, dressed in sporty English tweeds, entered the house.

Kane recognized him, and the calamitous nature of his arrival, without turning his head or shifting his eyes. The Apaches could not see him, but from Andrée's scream, rather than from any change in Kane's emotionless face, they guessed what had intervened.

Maréchal himself grasped the situation in a flash. Beyond Andrée's shoulder he caught sight of Kane, automatic in hand, and he pictured the scene in the room beyond his vision.

He swept Andrée into his embrace, her body acting as a shield in case Kane were to shoot at him. He tried to drag the girl backward, up the stairs, and partially succeeded; but the lithe, wiry creature fought like a young devil, scratching, trying to bite his hands, kicking futilely with her little boots.

At the racket they made, apprehensive lest Maréchal should actually be trying to kill the girl, Kane found it impossible to avoid a single glance backward at them; and on the instant, poised for just such an opportunity, Chicoq brought up a heavy shoe and kicked over the table upon which stood the one oil-lamp that lighted the house.

His purpose of plunging the room into darkness was foiled by the ignition of the oil from the broken lamp, which spread in a pool over the uneven floor; but the leaping flames, while rendering all the occupants visible, so clothed them with wavering shadows and half-lights that the eyes were baffled.

Kane fired instantly at Chicoq, and removed part of an ear; but the next instant he was obliged to meet the wild rush of one of the other Apaches.

As the fellow lunged at him, knife extended, and whining like an animal in his eagerness, Kane swung upward and over his knife hand, the heavy brass knuckles laying open his entire jaw, so that the blood spouted warmly over Kane's left wrist. The Apache dropped without a sound. Henceforth he would be sufficiently marked for police identification!

There had been only a little oil in the lamp, and the last pool flickered out in a black, odorous smudge as the Apache fell. Had the building been a rich museum of world treasures, or the home of a multi-

millionaire, it would no doubt have burned to the ground; but since it was a worthless shell of a house, its seasoned woodwork did not catch fire.

Behind him, in the hall, Kane could tell that Maréchal was succeeding in overcoming Andrée's resistance. In pitch darkness, no longer fearful of Kane's gun, and able to devote himself entirely to the dancing-girl, he was dragging her up-stairs. There was no possibility of going to her aid until Chicoq had been settled with; and Kane savagely turned toward his two remaining enemies.

The technic of the game would have included the frisking of the Apaches for weapons by Andrée. Kane understood that perfectly; but his fear for her safety, his anxiety to get her out at all costs and with the least possible delay, had led him deliberately to omit this formality. As it had turned out, nothing would have been gained, anyhow, for Maréchal's unexpected entry had altered everything. Two or three minutes to spare, and she would have been well outside. In any case, she would very likely have walked straight into his arms down the road.

So far as Kane was concerned, his situation was not at all desperate. He had only to slip out of the house in the dark; but with Andrée in Maréchal's hands, he must settle with the two Apaches in the quickest way, and go up-stairs to her aid.

The lone hand has certain obvious advantages. Merely by posting himself at the door, Kane could despatch them at his ease as they tried to come out. They were obliged to exert some caution in order not to mistake each other for him; while he had only to strike at any moving body, regardless of which it was.

But there was no time for any long-drawn affair. He must clean up below-stairs, and do it now!

Perfectly aware of the danger, he turned on his flash-light for the merest fraction of a second. He held it far out in his left hand—the one still adorned with brass knuckles.

Transient as was the beam which exposed the bare room, the response was immediate. On Kane's retina was focused the overturned table and its shattered lamp, the still inert form of the Apache on whose jaw he had swung, and the other two crouched together on the far side of the room. From the hand of one—not Chi-

coq, who held only the knife of his choice—traveled a thin spurt of smoke, and a bullet glanced from Kane's brass knuckle even as he snapped off the light.

Close shooting—better than he had credited them with—thought Kane, as he fired three times in return. There came a yell, a smothered cry, and the fall of a heavy body, which scrambled on the rough flooring; then silence.

Kane felt sure that he now had only Chicoq to deal with, below-stairs.

This resourceful gentleman had not lost a second in getting into action. He had kicked off his sabots, and with the wink of Kane's flash-light he leaped forward. The first indication of the attack, to Kane, came when his right hand was seized in a grip of astonishing power. Instinctively and luckily, his left caught Chicoq's in a similar lock. Thus the gun of one and the knife of the other were blocked, and the men were left straining and panting in the pitchy darkness.

Kane found that he could do no more than hold his own against the Apache's animal-like strength. Even as he twisted and turned, seeking to trip Chicoq, and fighting off his efforts to bury his teeth in Kane's wrists, a door slammed on the landing above, a key rasped in its lock, and the ancient stairs creaked beneath descending steps. Maréchal, unable longer to bear the suspense, had locked Andrée in and was coming down, a lighted candle in one hand and a revolver in the other.

Kane knew that his life was being measured in terms of seconds. His sole hope rested on staking all on a single chance. He could not free his gun hand. Chicoq, squat and secure on his feet as a tree, refused to yield to his grape-vines and back-heels. Suddenly he released the Apache's knife hand, at the same time flinging it violently aside. He dared not trust to a blow in the dark; for if it were not a knockout, if it merely hurt without disabling, Chicoq would plunge his knife to the hilt in Kane's body, before he could strike again.

What he did was not an uncommon sight in the London prize-ring of a couple of centuries ago. Catching Chicoq's thick neck with his free hand, he yanked him violently forward, at the same time butting him in the face with the top of his head.

Chicoq had no finely chiseled features to be ruined by the stunning crash; but his

entire face seemed to yield and crumble. His rudimentary nose, his teeth, his very cheek-bones, seemed to be driven back into his brain. Kane felt the relaxing fingers on his gun hand, and wrenched free. Chicoq's knife clattered to the floor, and his body followed.

Maréchal, nearing the foot of the stairs, covered the doorway with his gun. Kane cautiously advanced with his own, with the chances in his favor, as he was in shadow.

At this moment the front door opened again, and a small boy stood blinking in the candle-light.

Young Victor had truly suffered infant damnation! Thoroughly intending to obey Kane, at the sound of the shots and imprecations, coupled with Andrée's screams, he had found his legs propelling him toward the old house, as a somnambulist finds himself walking without volition. Powerless to stop, he had at length crept to the very door-step. He had dropped beside it when Maréchal turned in from the road and entered the house. For the past few minutes his ear had been glued to the keyhole. He thrust open the door now, and entered.

He saw Maréchal close before him, with a revolver menacing the dark doorway down the hall. From that doorway he saw Kane emerge, his own gun extended.

With a snarl like a tiger cub, Victor threw himself at Maréchal's legs. The dapper Frenchman, the veneer badly worn now, glared at the boy in surprise, and kicked him brutally in the stomach. Victor dropped in a forlorn little heap, and while Maréchal's leg was still in air, a steel-jacketed bullet drilled a neat hole through the knee.

The Frenchman dropped in his turn, his candle fell to the floor and expired, and in the darkness he and Kane emptied their guns, firing by the flashes.

When Kane's clip was empty, he turned back to the room, recovered the flash-light he had dropped in the struggle with Chicoq, put a fresh clip in his gun, and returned to the hall. Hanging over the banisters was Maréchal, who had received not less than four fatal shots and several disabling ones. One of them had passed through his head from temple to temple.

Beneath him lay Victor. Kane lifted him up and listened at his thin chest. Victor's wind had been very completely knocked out of his body, and that was all.

AT THE INSTANT WHEN ANDRÉE BECAME CONVINCED THAT HER LOVER WAS SLAIN SHE BEHELD A PALE AND MASK-LIKE DUPLICATE OF HIS FEATURES



"The plucky little beggar!" Kane grunted, carefully laying him down on his back.

Returning to the front room, he found his first victim breathing, but still unconscious. His face was a dreadful sight, but

rather pleasing compared to Chicoq's, from which he turned with loathing. Both of them might live to be guillotined, he decided; but the other Apache had two bullets through his heart.

Up-stairs now, and a key turned, and a dark-



HER LIPS PARTED TO UTTER A
TERRIFIED SCREAM

haired little beauty shedding tears of joy and bestowing upon valor the age-old spoils of the conqueror!

Somehow, Kane felt old and tired. Endearments left him unmoved. His nerves simply refused to react further, for the

time being. Nevertheless, he kissed Andrée tenderly, and gently unclasped her arms, warning her they must hurry away from that place of horrors.

"You 'ave keeled zem all, *hein?*" she asked.

"There's a couple of 'em might come to if we stick here and spoon all night," he admitted. "Besides, poor little Victor's knocked out."

The words sent her flying down the stairs. She stepped shudderingly past Maréchal, still grotesquely draped over the rail, and knelt beside the boy, calling him by many endearing diminutives which he would have repudiated with great indignation had he been conscious.

Kane fetched a dipper of water from the kitchen and dashed some drops into Victor's face; and he opened his eyes.

"Come on, old sport! We've cleaned up," Kane said.

"You are then alive, *monsieur?* And Andrée?"

"We all are, old-timer!"

Kane lifted the boy to his feet, and then upon his shoulder. Victor refused to be carried, however, and demonstrated the fact that he could walk.

XII

FIVE minutes later their stolid chauffeur, his face betraying no interest whatever in them or in the battle whose sounds had for a long time come to his ears, was proving the worth of his engine as they swept back to the Porte de Romainville.

Much as Kane desired to be present at the reunion, he left them near the Hotel de Ville, from which point he ordered Victor to return with Andrée to her attic and the two little sisters, promising to see them upon the morrow.

"Good-by, or rather *au revoir*, little sweetheart!" he whispered, taking Andrée into his arms, and knowing that she was his own forever and ay.

She was troubled over his defection, and he had difficulty in preventing her from leaving the crazy taxi-auto and coming with him.

When they were at last out of sight, he proceeded to the Prefecture and nonchalantly related his story.

There followed certain interesting formalities which cast a light upon national psychology.

First of all, Kane's story was investi-

gated, and his casualties fetched in to morgue and hospital. The delight felt by the police, who had long yearned for the heart's blood of both Chicoq and the equally dangerous but subtler Maréchal, was admirably concealed. The American was made to feel how very gravely he had offended the majesty of France by taking her prerogatives into his unofficial if efficient hands. He yawned, and smoked many cigarettes.

A cablegram was sent to New York for his record.

Word was returned that William Kane was a gentleman of leisure and independent means, against whom the police of his native land had nothing whatever. The message was signed by no less a personage than Deputy Assistant Commissioner Aloysius Ryan.

There followed, in its own dignified time, court proceedings, at which Kane was represented by an able and very expensive gentleman known as Maître Vignol.

Ultimately, Paris preserved justice and the proprieties in her own inimitable way. Kane was fined one thousand francs for carrying dangerous weapons without permission, and for striking a citizen in the face with his bare hand, and was warned solemnly to keep the peace. Afterward, at the Boulevard du Palais, the general headquarters of police, he was kissed rapturously on both cheeks by the prefect, the sub-prefect, and the chief of police; and, observing suspicious symptoms of similar intentions on the part of several minor officials, he made a clean getaway with all his old-time skill and nerve!

You may, in sailing down the Seine in a "vapor boat" some fine afternoon, have observed just below the bridge of Clichy the flag of flags waving proudly over one of the prettiest little villas to be seen thereabout.

If, moved by the spectacle of Old Glory caressed by the hospitable breezes, you were to disembark and crunch up the neatly graveled walk and tap the big brass eagle which forms the villa's door-knocker, a small boy with more shiny buttons than it would at first appear there was cloth enough to fasten them to, would answer your summons.

It would be safe to address him as Victor.

Were you to present your card, as an

American visitor you would be welcomed most heartily by the master of the house and his pretty and vivacious wife, and tea would be urged upon you, with all that tea implies and not a little that it strictly doesn't.

And if you were to wonder by what name to address the charming and rosy-cheeked maid who would wheel in the tea-wagon, you would have two equally probable guesses. One would be Louise; the other, Henriette.

THE END

The Chance of a Lifetime

BY ROLF BENNETT

Illustrated by Dudley Gloyne Summers

THEM that go down into the sea in ships see some strange sights," observed the seafaring man with the black patch over his eye. "I misremember where I read that," he went on, "but it's one of the truest things that was ever said or wrote. Yes, sir, sailors do see some strange sights—things you wouldn't believe unless you saw them properly printed in a newspaper."

He paused and meditatively rubbed up some tobacco between his horny palms. We were resting casually upon a seat in the park—the seafaring man with the black patch over his eye, a young man with a lost expression, and myself. The seafaring man, having rubbed up the tobacco, proceeded to fill a pipe of ripe and ancient aspect.

"Properly printed in a newspaper," he repeated thoughtfully, at the same time producing a match from one of his pockets. "Then you'd believe it; every one would believe it. It's natural!"

He paused again, struck the match on his trousers, and lighted his pipe. When the latter was drawing freely—as I have said, it was ancient and it was ripe—he turned suddenly to the young man with the lost expression and fixed his one available eye balefully upon him. The young man shifted uneasily in his seat.

"What would you say," demanded the seafaring man, tapping his victim on the knee with the stem of his pipe—"what would you say if, all of a sudden and contrary to what was natural and right, you found yourself in mid air? Suspended, in a manner of speaking?"

The young man coughed nervously and looked round as if seeking some way of escape from this puzzling problem; but the solitary eye held him fast with its unswerving, fishlike stare.

"I—I don't know," he said at last, and coughed to hide his confusion.

The seafaring man grinned maliciously and turned to me.

"What would *you* say, mate?" he sternly demanded.

"It wouldn't bear repeating," I told him. "But why do you want to know? Have you ever been suspended in mid air contrary to what was natural and right?"

"I'll tell you," he said. "One time I sailed with a skipper of the name of Jonas Higham. It was a queer name, I allow, but he hadn't got any other, so he put up with it. And he was highly respected, being a truthful, sober man with children of his own and a wife. Well, Jonas owned a schooner called the Sunbeam, that used to trade between Frisco and Hawaii. Mostly it was Hawaii, but sometimes he'd get a cargo for some other place. Now, on this trip that I'm telling you about, we'd discharged at Honolulu and were waiting for another cargo. Well, we got a cargo for Samoa, which is more than two thousand miles south of Hawaii—nearer three thousand, maybe.

"Jonas wrote a letter to his wife and children, telling 'em where he was going. He was always very particular about writing home, was Jonas. It was a habit he'd got. So we pulled up our hook, hoisted our sails, and away we went. We were all



DUDLEY
GLYNN
SMITH

happy and pleased, thinking what a fine pay-day we'd have when we got back; but we should have piped a very different tune if we'd known what was coming. Yes, sir, we should that! And it wouldn't have been a tune you could

them. It's the eyes, most likely. You can generally tell from the eyes."

The young man shifted still more uneasily in his seat and coughed again. The seafaring man went on.

"For about half the trip, or maybe more, we had lime-juicer's weather—a following wind and a calm sea. A gentleman's life, that's what it was—nothing to do and plenty of time to do it in. We didn't have to lay hands on a sheet, even. It was unnatural, that's all you could say. We might have known something was going to happen, if we'd only thought about it. That's the way of things, according to my experience. Get a spell of fine weather, and you hit a snorter; be happy to-day, and you'll wish you were dead to-morrow; have a booze up on Saturday, and you get

dance to, neither—quite to the contrary; but we didn't know, and nobody guessed. The mate had a dream that he was being hanged, which some people might have took for a warning; but we didn't, because it seemed so natural. He was the sort of man who might get hanged any day. Some people are like that."

The seafaring man paused and gazed fixedly at the young man with the lost expression.

"Some people are like that," he repeated impressively. "You look like one of

a head like a pumpkin on Sunday. That's life, that is."

The seafaring man again paused, apparently to meditate upon these melancholy truths. Presently he roused himself and continued.

"As I say, it was all like a beautiful dream for the first half of the voyage—right till we got among all those gummy little islands they call Polynesia. There are hundreds of them—thousands, maybe. They're everywhere. There are all sorts and sizes— islands that stay where they're

"WE COULDN'T GIVE JOE A PROPER BURIAL, HIS CORPSE NOT BEING AVAILABLE, BUT WE—

stuck, islands that float, islands that sink, islands with names, and islands whose names have never been found out. Where there aren't islands, there are coral reefs. You never saw such a place—all islands and reefs like fly-blows on a chart. Well, we got among them; and then—kerwollop!—down came a fog. I never saw such a fog before and never since. It was like being tombed up alive to be in it. You couldn't see a yard in front of you even with a light. And thick! We had to cut our way through it with knives to get from one end of the ship's deck to the other, so to speak. It was as solid as a pudding and nearly as good as meat and drink, that fog was.

"The wind had dropped, and there we lay becalmed—not moving an inch, not able to see a foot in front of us, and hardly able to speak, our throats being that choked up with the fog. So we all sat in the cabin playing poker to pass the time.

There was nothing else to do. When we got tired of that, we listened to Captain Jonas playing hymns



on the concertina. It was very affecting, and made some of us think of our homes and mothers and the wicked lives we'd led.

II

"It was about two o'clock in the morning by ship's time when I was woke up by a queer sort of feeling—something like what you get when you're in an elevator and it goes down quick. Then there was a pretty heavy sort of a jar, as if we'd come to a sudden stop.

"We've struck a reef," thinks I. 'That's what we've done!'

"And then I heard shouts on deck and the noise of people rushing about. I hopped out of my bunk pretty smart, I tell you. It was no joke running aground in a fog, especially in these latitudes, which are chock-full of head-hunters and cannibals, as every one knows who's been there. Yes, sir, there are some unpleasant people there, I give you my word. Well, I went on deck and found every one there except the bosun, who was taking soundings down below to see if the schooner was filling with water.

"Well," says the skipper, as the bosun came up with his sounding-rod, 'what's the damage?'

"Ain't none," says the bosun. 'We haven't made an inch of water, and there's no sign of a leak.'

"That's queer," says Jonas. 'I'd have sworn we hit something.'

"We were all of the same opinion, for not one but hadn't felt the jolt; so Jonas told the bosun to get out the lead-line and try a cast, to see how deep the water was. The bosun felt his way for'ard and got the lead-line. Then he paid it out over the bows of the schooner, fathom after fathom, till there wasn't any more to pay out, the line being only twenty fathoms long.

"Twenty fathoms and not touched bottom yet!" he sings out.

"That was a starter, if you like; for how could we have struck a reef in over twenty fathoms of water?

"Take a cast aft," says Jonas.

"So the bosun stumbled aft, falling over hatchways and knocking up against people and using words I won't repeat. He couldn't see where he was going, and we couldn't see where he was coming, it being that dark; but at last he reached the stern and cast the lead. Fathom after fathom up to twenty fathoms, and still he hadn't touched bottom.

"After that we began to think we must have all been dreaming. Who ever heard of a boat grounding in twenty fathoms of

water? Why"—here the seafaring man stopped and focused his eye upon me—"even you wouldn't believe a yarn like that, would you?"

"It would certainly sound incredible," I answered cautiously.

"Of course it would. Even a landlubber knows that well enough," agreed the seafaring man.

He suddenly transferred his attention to the young man with the lost expression.

"You wouldn't believe it, either, would you?" he demanded. "'That man,' you'd say, meaning me, 'is a liar,' wouldn't you?"

A hunted expression came into the young man's face, as he tried vainly to escape the accusing eye fixed so unflinchingly upon him.

"Eh?" insisted his tormentor. "You would, wouldn't you?"

"N-not exactly," he gasped at last.

"Well," remarked the seafaring man, withdrawing his basilisk eye, "maybe you're right. I won't say you're not. It's always as well to be on the safe side. We'll let it pass.

"So there we were," he went on, "in the blackest black fog, and with the lead-line not hitting bottom at twenty fathoms. We couldn't have piled up—not in the ordinary way of speaking; and we all felt easier in our minds.

"Now there was a boy aboard the Sun-beam—a boy of the name of Joe. Whether it was his own name, or just a name some one had given him, I don't know; but he always answered to it, and seemed quite satisfied. Well, he was a mischievous young swab, like most boys are, only a lot more so. He was always in trouble; always doing what he didn't ought to. And saucy! My, but we had to lather him. We had to keep his breeches warm, I tell you. Him and the rope's-end were like David and Jonathan—they were seldom apart. A regular little monkey he was, and I felt sorry for his parents, if he'd ever had any. Well, this Joe must start larking about just as we were going below again. I dare say he thought it was safe to do it, the fog being so thick that no one could see him.

"Come down below, you little devil!" shouts the bosun.

"Go and kiss your grandmother!" says Joe.

"Which shows you the sort of boy he

was. No respect for any one; not even for the bosun, who was old enough to be his grandfather.

"I'll tan your hide till it peels off you," says the bosun. 'You wait till I catch you, my lad!'

"Which, of course, was only his manner of speaking.

"But Joe gave him a back-answer instead. Then, I suppose, he must have thought the bosun was coming after him, and he made a rush for the rigging. Anyway, we heard a cry, and then some one shouts out:

"The boy's overboard!"

"Chuck him a life-buoy!" shouts the skipper.

"I caught hold of a life-buoy with about ten fathoms of rope on it, and sent it over the side.

"Shout!" says the bosun. 'Then maybe he'll find his bearings.'

"So we all shouted as hard as we could; but there was no answer—not a sound. We shouted again; all of us, but still there wasn't a sound.

"Haul in the life-buoy there," says Jonas to me.

"So I started to haul it in. All of a sudden it struck me there was something uncommonly queer about that life-buoy. It didn't feel as if it was floating, somehow. And then, when I got hold of it, I had a shock—yes, sir, one of the biggest shocks I've ever had in my life. It's a wonder my hair didn't turn white; for that life-buoy was *dry*! Yes, except for a little dampness from the fog, it was as dry as this seat we're sitting on. What do you think of that? And with ten fathoms of rope on it. There was a nut to crack, if you like!

III

"WHEN I showed it to the skipper and the rest, they were dumfounded. There's no other word for it. And who wouldn't be? It was enough to scare any man. Ten fathoms of rope, mind you, and not an inch of it wet! It would take a few college professors to figger that out, I reckon. At last the skipper spoke.

"Get a bucket," says he. 'Bend twenty fathoms of rope to it, and drop it overboard.'

"Well, the bosun did. Then he hauled it up again, and there wasn't a drop of water in it—not a spoonful. It was as dry

as ever, and so was the rope. Twenty fathoms down that bucket had gone, and it hadn't touched water. Do you get that? Well, there was a pretty conundrum, as you can see.

"None of us spoke—not a word. You could hear the silence ticking past. We'd forgot all about Joe, all about everything. We were up against it and no mistake. Then the bosun spoke.

"'We're up in the clouds, that's where we are,' he says. 'The sea's been and dropped away from us. The old schooner's a durned air-ship, that's what's the matter with it!'

"But the skipper wouldn't have that.

"'No,' says he, 'there's only one way to account for it. We've been lifted up in the fog. I thought there was something uncommon about this fog. It's the worst I've ever seen or heard tell of. It's thick enough to lift a ship. There never was such a fog known before. It'll be in all the newspapers. When it clears off, we'll drop back into the sea.'

"We felt a little comforted at that, though some of us wondered how far we'd fall when we started, and what sort of bump we'd fetch; but we all agreed the skipper had hit the nail on the head. There was no other way to it.

"'Why, then,' says the bosun, 'we'll find that young Joe is floating about in it somewhere.'

"'Of course,' answers the skipper. 'I shouldn't be surprised if we picked him up.'

"'Good enough,' says the bosun. 'And won't I half warm his breeches for him, the little varmint!'

"And that seemed so natural and home-like, we felt more comforted than ever. Well, the fog stayed for another twelve hours, and then it started to lift. As it got clearer, we got more nervous. We were thinking of the bump when we dropped back into the sea. We reckoned we'd make a tidy splash; but though the fog lifted, we didn't drop. No, sir, we stayed right where we were, like a captive balloon. We could just catch a glimpse of the sea underneath and the sky overhead; and that was all. A nice thing to happen to respectable men, and some of 'em married, with wives and children, wasn't it? Floating about in mid air like spirits, with a cargo mostly of canned salmon.

"And then we had another shock; for when all the fog had cleared away, we found we weren't in the air at all—not properly speaking, that is. But what do you think had happened to us? Why, we were right on top of a giddy little mountain. - Yes, sir, that's where we were. And there was the sea about sixty fathoms below us, with the sun shining on it just as if nothing had happened—just as if it was quite ornery for a ship to be stuck on the top of a mountain.

"Then the skipper tried to explain matters. He said there must have been a submarine earthquake while we were in the fog, and the Sunbeam must have passed over it. An island had been thrown up, and we'd been caught on the peak and carried up with it. That was what Jonas said. I tell it you for what it's worth. You're not bound to believe it, if you don't want to. Perhaps you can think of a better way out of it. But there we were, stuck high and dry, whatever way we'd got there, and that was enough to go on with.

"Jonas said we'd better explore a bit; so we got some ropes out of the sail-locker and started to scramble down the mountain. It was no easy job, I tell you, for it was as steep as the roof of a house, and when we weren't clinging on by our eyebrows, we were hanging on with our teeth. It's a fact we were. And when we got down to the bottom we were no better off; for that mountain dropped sheer into the sea. It was as bare as the shell of a new-laid egg—not a tuft of grass, not a shrub, not even a bit of seaweed. There wasn't enough on all that island to feed a baby-cockroach. In fact, you couldn't call it an island at all. It was just a big spike of rock sticking up out of the water; but we did find one thing, and that was young Joe's cap.

"'Poor, poor Joe!' says the skipper, when we showed it to him. 'He had his faults, but he was a good boy; and now he's cut off in the flower of his youth.'

"'I loved that boy like a father,' says the bosun, 'and I treated him like a son. Many and many's the time I've larruped his little hide; and now I'll never larrup it no more.'

"'Aye,' says one of the men, 'you behaved good to him, bosun. You kept him in the straight path. And now the poor little feller's been and drowned.'

"Well, we all felt very solemn and sad-

like, as was only natural; for we had all loved Joe—leastways, we felt we had just then. We forgot what a pesky little varmint he'd been, and only remembered his virtues and his red, shiny face.

"We couldn't give him a proper burial, his corpse not being available, but we held a funeral service over his cap. The skip-

a tough job getting down, it was the very devil getting back. Climbing a church spire would be fun to it. I very nearly lost my life; for I was hanging on to a knob of rock, when all of a sudden it came off in my hand. Yes, I reckon that was the narrowest shave I ever had; but I managed to cling on with the other hand and slip the knob of rock into my pocket. Why? Because if I'd thrown it away, it would have hit the other fellows coming up behind. It was a good thing I thought of that. If I hadn't taken that little precaution, there might have been another funeral



"I PULLED THE ROCK OUT AND WAS ABOUT TO HEAVE IT OVERBOARD WHEN THE BOSUN STOPPED ME. 'LOOK AT IT!' HE SHOUTS"

per read the proper prayers, while we all stood round with bare heads and sniffed. When the skipper came to the last words we committed his cap to the deep and the bosun broke into sobs.

"Well, sir, we were moved—all of us, even the skipper—at the sight of the bosun's grief. We all felt for him.

IV

"AFTER the sad ceremony was over, we started back for the ship. If it had been

service, and I reckon we'd all had enough for one day.

"When we got back to the ship, we held a meeting. We decided that the best thing to do was to drop the lead-line over the side with our flag bent on it upside down as a signal of distress. Some ship might see it and rescue us. It was our only hope, unless we wanted to live up there for the rest of our lives like sea-birds, and live on canned salmon—which, of course, we didn't.

"That evening I got another shock. I was never on a voyage before where I got so many shocks. It's a wonder I lived through them; but I did. And what do you think this shock was? I'll tell you. All of a sudden I remembered that bit of rock I'd put in my pocket. As I didn't want to carry it about with me, I pulled it out, and was about to heave it overboard, when the bosun put out his hand and stopped me.

"Look at it!" he shouts.

"I looked—just at that part where I'd broken it off; and it wasn't rock at all, not properly speaking. What do you think it was?"

The seafaring man paused, but neither I nor the young man with the lost expression volunteered any suggestion; so he went on again.

"Why, *gold!*" he almost shouted. "Yes, sir, pure, unadulterated gold, that's what it was. May I never stir from this seat if there's a word of a lie to it! I tell you, it took the wind out of me. It did that. I came as near swooning as ever I did in my life. Just you think of it! That there submarine earthquake had heaved up a mountain of gold—pure, solid gold. There was more gold in that mountain than in all the rest of the world put together. With that mountain we'd be the richest men in all creation—richer than Rockefeller and Pierpont Morgan and the Duke of Westminster—multibillionaires. We'd be able to live in houses built of gold bricks and smoke fine cigars all the rest of our lives; and when we died, they'd bury us in solid gold coffins, and kings would come to our funeral.

"We held another meeting. We decided not to take any chances, but to start filling the Sunbeam with gold the very next day. We'd have started that night, only it was too dark. To save time we heaved the cargo overboard, so as to make room for the gold—all the canned salmon, everything. We even emptied the sail-locker; and then we went to bed.

"I guess it must have been about six bells, which is three o'clock in the morning, when something happened—a kind of jolt, so to speak. It woke us all up, and we went on deck. A big wave hit us—yes, sir, a durned, ornery, wet wave. And then we knew what had happened. That gold mountain had sunk down under the sea as suddenly as it had come up. It was gone;

and we were floating on the water, just as if it had never been. There was an end of all our dreams. No cigars, no gold houses, no gold coffins—nothing! We were just ornery, common, low-down sailor men; and we might have been—"

Here the seafaring man broke off abruptly, and something like a sob shook his sturdy frame; but presently, mastering his emotions, he went on.

"I can't tell you what we said. It wouldn't do. Besides, I've forgotten some of it. And just then, just when we were beginning to understand what we'd lost, who should show up but Joe? Yes, sir, Joe. He'd been hiding, so as to give us all a fright. He thought it was a lark—thought he was being funny. He couldn't have showed himself at a worse time—not for his own comfort. We wanted something to take our minds off our loss, and he was it.

"My word, didn't the bosun give him a larruping! You could have heard Joe's yells a mile away. He felt it, and no mistake; and it did us good to hear him. It was the very thing we wanted. It comforted us and made us feel good. His hollerings were a great consolation to us all, and we felt that the bosun had risen above his sorrows and was once more proving himself a man. We had a great respect for the bosun."

The seafaring man again paused and looked wistfully in front of him, as if lost in thought. Then, with a deep sigh, he turned to me.

"Maybe," said he, "you don't believe what I've told you. Maybe you think I'm just spinning a cuffer because you're a land guy. Well, I'll prove every word I've said."

He put his hand in his pocket, and, after some fumbling, brought out a piece of yellow, metallic-looking stuff about the size of his fist.

"There!" said he. "That's the identical piece of gold rock that I had the luck to hang on to and put in my pocket. Solid gold it is, and worth five hundred dollars. I've been told that by a man who knows."

He held it up so that I might get a better view.

"I like you," he went on—somewhat irrelevantly, I thought. "You're a man after my own heart; and I always like to do a kind action when I can. It was a thing I learned at my mother's knee, and

I've always carried it out. That lump of gold—pure, solid gold, mind you—is worth five hundred dollars—not a cent less; but I've took a fancy to you, and you shall have it for one hundred dollars."

He held it out invitingly.

At that moment the young man with the lost expression stirred in his seat.

"May I see it?" he asked timidly.

The seafaring man held it out to him.

Then something flashed in the sunlight, and next moment the seafaring man had been accommodated with a pair of bright steel bracelets.

"We've been looking for you," said the young man with the lost expression. "This way, bo!"

And they left—the seafaring man with the black patch over his eye and the young man with the lost expression.

A REMEMBRANCE OF NAPLES

LAST night I sat in my garden
After a crystal shower,
And the spirit of Lasca came to me
From the heart of a jasmine-flower.
It carried me back to Naples
And the marble villa where
The roses blossomed for us alone
At the head of the water-stair.

Many the vows we plighted
By moonlight long ago;
And his were true as the rock-ribbed hills,
But mine were like the snow.
He swept the harp-strings golden
Under the silver light—
"Non ti scordar di me!" he sang,
And heart-break filled the night.

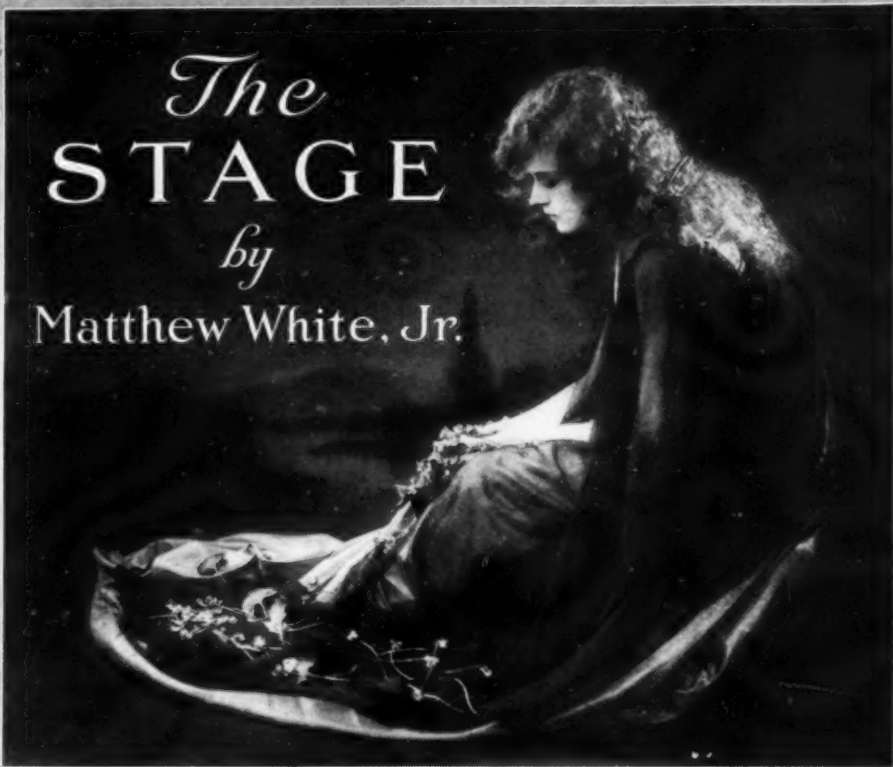
I heard a nightingale singing
Once to the evening star;
I heard the lilt of a skylark ring
From the gates of the sun ajar.
It was the voice of Lasca
In the nightingale's liquid note;
It was the voice of Lasca, too,
That pulsed in the skylark's throat.

Gray-green the rotting olives
Lie in the grasses deep,
Gray-green on the shady villa's steps
The leprous lichens creep.
Some day I will cross the ocean
And climb the hill as of yore,
To leave a garland of jasmine-flowers
At the rusty iron door.

For the twining arms of a woman
The ivy on the stone;
For the music that he loved so well
The night wind's eery moan.
I have reared a donjon-tower
Of secret memory,
Where "Non ti scordar di me!" he sings
Forevermore to me.

Minna Irving

The STAGE by Matthew White, Jr.



ALISON BRADSHAW, WHO PLAYS THE YOUNGER SISTER IN "THE MIRAGE," THE STRIKING
DRAMA BY EDGAR SELWYN STARRING FLORENCE REED

From a photograph by Backrach, New York

"MODERN drama aims to be photographic in its faithfulness to life, and as the age prides itself on being wholly unemotional, it is not to be wondered at that its plays lack soul. It is the materialism of the twentieth century that destroys the art of it."

Thus Effie Ellsler, who was the heroine of "Hazel Kirke" in its phenomenal run at the Madison Square Theater in 1880. Now she is the very active old lady of sixty in another smashing success—"The Bat," a comedy of murder and mystery. It was to learn what differences this accomplished and versatile actress saw between the plays of forty years ago and those of to-day that I sought her out "back stage" at the Morosco.

I found that the old lady part of her is chiefly a matter of make-up. Indeed, there seemed to be something incongruous in

linking up the last year of Hayes with the last of Wilson in a chat with a woman who impressed one as being wholly of the present.

"It was a grandiloquent period, wasn't it?" she ruminated. "Not long ago I came across a copy of my part in 'Hazel Kirke,' and when I read it over I laughed until I had to wipe my eyes. That's why the plays of yesterday so seldom live. Their heroics seem funny to us of to-day; but very possibly the plays of to-day will die as quickly because they aren't heroic enough. Those that win the passing fancy do so because of their lightness, their aptness at reproducing the fad of the moment. As to our players, I sometimes wonder where they are to come from in the future. One must have more than a pretty face to last out, and yet in these days, when managers look for types to suit the part, in-

stead of permitting the actor to adapt himself to it, there is absolutely no chance for growth. I am thankful to say that I was able to keep myself out of the rut of a single line of characters.

"Another thing—I claim that no one can be successful in emotional work who cannot play comedy; but if the actor feels the comedy while he is playing it, his audience does not. My present rôle? Well"—with a laugh—"I suppose I must be a type in the eyes of the authors; as Mr. Hopwood insisted that the old lady must be small. And I certainly can't complain that I haven't enough to do. I'm on hand when the curtain goes up, and I keep at it pretty persistently till its final fall."

In pursuit of further views on the future supply of players, I called on Florence Reed, star in "The Mirage," and daughter of Roland Reed, famous *fin de siècle* comedian. It was but little encouragement she gave me.

"Pride in the theater seems to have vanished," she affirmed. "There will be no new traditions to hand down. A young girl makes a hit in a part for which she has been picked because she looks it, and after that plays are built around her pleasing personality. When her face and figure no longer suggest the ingénue, there will be nothing for her but retirement, for she will have had no training to do anything else. How can she be equipped for a calling which demands everything—everything? Thank Heaven, I was brought up at a time when stock companies had not yet become synonymous with cheapness. It's enough to make one blue when friends from the Continent have told me what wonderful opportunities their theaters offer a beginner to acquire versatility. In London, of course, the present outlook is worse even than in New York. Over there they have practically no new leading women of their own coming along; and are already looking to America for their supply.

"Pictures? Well, they certainly made an actress out of Alice Brady. On the other hand, the prompt fizzling out of the 'Blue Flame' on Broadway did more for the speaking stage than weeks of propaganda could have accomplished."

Even our young men are dogged by the managers' mania for types. William Williams, who plays the brother in "The Mirage," told me that he was delighted to have a part which, slight as it is, possesses

sufficient punch to take him out of what he was pleased to term the "he ingénue" class. Williams, who is Pittsburgh born and Harvard bred, set out to become a dancer, but decided that there was no real future for him in that line, and obtained the rôle of the French boy in "Lilac Time," with Jane Cowl, because he could speak the language. After that he went into the army; then came a brief experience as the lame youth in "The Phantom Hero," followed by the son in "The Checkerboard."

In line with the opinions of Miss Ellsler and Florence Reed on the present-day tendency toward types is the advice given by Lotta Crabtree, the veteran actress, now resident in Boston, to Helen Hayes.

"Be sure, my dear," she wrote, "that the next part your manager gives you is as wide a departure as possible from *Bab*, *Cora* in 'Clarence,' and the artist's daughter in 'Dear Brutus.'"

The havoc wrought by the type madness was forcefully exemplified the evening before these lines were written. I had gone to the première of "Thy Name Is Woman," serving to reintroduce Mary Nash to American audiences after her London triumph in "The Man Who Came Back." The piece, which has a Spanish setting, but is said to be the work of a Hungarian author, had a mixed reception, but the choice of Curtis Cooksey for the soldier hero, just because he looks like a big-muscled fellow who would shine in contrast to a sickly husband, proved a serious mistake.

New York took amazingly to this stalwart young Kentuckian when he played *Pug* to the schoolmistress of Mary Ryan at this same Playhouse three years ago; but as the Pyrenean guardsman set on to gain sergeant's stripes by making love to the smuggler's wife, he is wofully miscast. As the *Herald* critic put it, he suggests "a New York policeman trying to break into society." More's the pity, for Cooksey is really a capable player, and deserves to get his rôles for the intelligence inside his head, rather than for what lies outside it in the rest of his body.

Miss Nash, who of course must be delighted with a part that affords her the whole emotional gamut to run, fell a bit short of what we had expected from her, but we must blame the play for much of this. To have four acts and only four characters is a severe test for any theatrical



MARGUERITE ARMSTRONG, LEADING WOMAN IN THE UNIVERSAL-JEWEL MOTION-PICTURE,
"FOOLISH WIVES"

entertainment, and only in the final scenes does the tragedy by Carl Schoner and Benjamin F. Glazer rise superior to this constricting limitation.

While on the subject of past and present methods of selecting players, and with the idea of giving both sides a fair showing, I will quote a sentence or two from Alfred Berlyn's recent article in the *London Stage* on "Was the Old Better?"

The present, let us own, is not an age of supreme and overmastering genius in any department of

human activity, and in that respect the art of the theater is neither better nor worse off than any other. But it is an age of plentiful ability and widely diffused cleverness, and the theater of today possesses these attributes to a degree which, despite the lack of giants, places it in many vital respects far in advance of that of any previous period, however "palmy," or however closely associated with this or that famous name.

It is neither an English nor an American player thus far in the present season who has done most to remind us of the great old-time actors who triumphed by sheer



ELIZABETH RISDON, WHO IS ELLIE DUNN IN THE THEATER GUILD'S NOTABLE PRODUCTION OF BERNARD SHAW'S "HEARTBREAK HOUSE"

From her latest photograph by Hixon-Connelly Studios, Kansas City

dramatic power. He is a young man of thirty, a Russian by birth, but he elects to be known on the stage by the Hebrew appellation of Ben-Ami, under which he achieved wide recognition last season in the Yiddish output of the Jewish Art Theater, once the Garden. Arthur Hopkins, with his far-seeing eye, spotted the possi-

bilities in the man, and set him to studying English, just as Henry Miller did some time ago in the case of Nazimova. In mid November he made his début in the vernacular at the Greenwich Village, as the poet husband of a frivolous wife in "Samson and Delilah," a rather commonplace tragedy by Sven Lange, a Danish critic,



JULIA SANDERSON, STARRING ALONG WITH RAYMOND HITCHCOCK AND G. P. HUNTLEY IN
THE REVUE "HITCHY-KOO, 1920"

From her latest photograph by Lewis-Smith, Chicago



FLORENCE FLINN, ONE OF THE ADOPTED CHILDREN IN EARL CARROLL'S PRODUCTION OF THE COMEDY-DRAMA BY HIMSELF AND GEORGE BARR MCCUTCHEON, "DADDY DUMPLINS," FEATURING MACLYN ARBUCKLE

which was Ben-Ami's strong card last winter at Madison Avenue and Twenty-Seventh Street.

In the next day's comments, after descanting on the young actor's fine handling of indifferent material, Heywood Brown, of the *Tribune*, went on to say:

Making bricks without straw is a stunt. The next step is to use straw and build higher. We prefer to be more conservative than usual, and to say that here is a new man in the English-speaking theater who seems to be a great artist, perhaps one of the greatest. In fact, we are willing to go a little further. We will lay ten to one; but the time has not yet come, we think, to collect wagers.

Alexander Woolcott, in the *Times*, saw "a young Russian playing easily and unhampered in an alien tongue, and revealing, even in the work of an author of stature far lower than his own, the skill and force and endowment of a great actor." J. Ranken Towse, veteran reviewer for the *Evening Post*, opined that "in his sudden and tigerish assault upon his hated rival, Mr. Ben-Ami showed a flash of that volcanic passion which distinguishes tragic power from mere melodramatic vehemence."

A witness of the performance, not a critic by profession, discovered in Ben-Ami an actor who lacks charm of voice and delivery, and who offends by an overexpenditure of energy where such display is unnecessary, but who possesses a wonderfully mobile face and a power of interpretation which there is no gainsaying. The size of the audiences and their reaction to the star's work, would seem to justify Mr. Hopkins in his venture.

SHAKESPEARIAN FOLLY

Of all our native playwrights, in my estimation, Clare Kummer comes nearest to Oscar Wilde in her ability to turn out dialogue that scintillates tirelessly and not spasmodically. In her newest comedy, "Rollo's Wild Oat," the hero's offense is nothing worse than a determination to use a little fortune that has come to him in realizing the one ambition of his life—to play *Hamlet*. How he spends the money in getting together a company to support him, how he insists that his *Ophelia* shall be a sweet young girl who is perfectly certain she can't act the part, how he meets an untoward interruption at the premiere, and what happens thereafter—all this is told through six scenes in a series of episodes that keep mirth rampant. A love in-

terest supplies what basic plot there is—slight, to be sure, but to my notion amply sufficient to furnish forth an evening of pure delight.

Miss Kummer on this occasion is her own producer, and she has picked an altogether admirable cast, headed by the man of men for *Rollo* in Roland Young, whom the disintegration of "Scrambled Wives" left free to accept the engagement. Young is aided and abetted by Lotus Robb, the most engaging ingénue I have seen in many a night. Miss Robb was fortunate enough to get her early training in stock, but has had practically no previous experience on Broadway. She played lead in the road company of "Why Marry," and last season was in the preliminary try-out of "The Challenge."

THE POTENCY OF PICTURES

Could I have had a prevision of the movies, when in this department for April, 1898, after descanting on the palpable delight evoked by the supper scene in "Way Down East," I went on to say:

For some unknown reason there is invariably a delicious flutter of expectancy in the audience when chairs are drawn up to a table on the stage. Is it, we wonder, because there is a hope that now the players will perforce stop talking for a while?

The triumph achieved by D. W. Griffith's picturization of Lottie Blair Parker's play indicates that the desire to see rather than to listen is shared by multitudes of theatergoers to-day who are paying as much as two dollars apiece to witness the silent reproduction of a play that has been knocking about the country for the past twenty-two years. That they get their money's worth there is no gainsaying. In the first place the Griffith trade-mark assures them that they will see some wonderful photographic effects. They know, too, that the original drama will be adequately reproduced in a scenario prepared by Anthony Paul Kelly, author of "Three Faces East."

Furthermore, the cast is headed by those two prime favorites of screenland, Lillian Gish and Richard Barthelmess, with Lowell Sherman and Creighton Hale for the villain and professor respectively, and Burr McIntosh and Vivian Ogden in their original parts as the *Squire* and *Martha Perkins*. Over and above all, the free scope of the cinema in permitting the swift alternation of comedy and pathos and introduction of



LILLIAN GISH, WHO IS ANNA MOORE IN D. W. GRIFFITH'S REMARKABLE PHOTOPLAY VERSION OF "WAY DOWN EAST"

From her latest photograph by Victor Soreg



EDNA MURPHY, WHO IS LUCY IN WILLIAM FOX'S NOTABLE PICTURE, "OVER THE HILL," BASED ON WILL CARLETON'S FAMOUS POEM, "OVER THE HILL TO THE POORHOUSE"

From a photograph by Apsda, New York

scenes impossible to the spoken drama is displayed more strikingly, perhaps, than in any previous offering. Nor must I omit a word for the wondrously effective orchestral accompaniment to the picture, which is now being presented by twenty special companies in leading American cities.

Especially to be commended is the spirit that prompted a retention of the period in

which the piece was written, so that there is neither motor-car nor telephone to produce a jarring note. And, by the way, people of that bygone era seemed just as happy without these supposedly indispensable adjuncts of modern civilization. My one word of criticism goes to the unduly prolonged scenes amid the whirling ice cakes. While they are almost appallingly



TERESA MAXWELL-CONOVER, ENACTING THE YOUNG MOTHER-IN-LAW IN THE ZIMBALIST MUSICAL-COMEDY HIT, "HONEYDEW"

From her latest photograph by Mishkin, New York

realistic, I cannot but feel that there is just a tinge of long-discarded movie chase atmosphere imparted by *David's* persistent leaping from floe to floe in pursuit of the drifting *Anna*.

Coincident with the long run on Broadway of "Way Down East" is that of another picture, "Over the Hill," the William Fox film made from Will Carleton's

famous poem of the seventies, "Over the Hill to the Poorhouse." Three theaters of the Great White Way have already housed it at two-dollar prices, and their floors have been drenched with tears shed by the women spectators. In plot it is simple almost to the point of commonplaceness, but the human appeal in the thing is so potent that there's no getting away from its pull



MITZI, STARRING IN HENRY W. SAVAGE'S NEWEST MUSICAL-COMEDY PRODUCTION,
"LADY BILLY," WITH A BOOK BY ZELDA SEARS

From her latest photograph by Edward Thayer Monros, New York

on the heart-strings; and without a distinguished name in the cast, the acting is of a high order throughout. As in the case of "Way Down East," the management announces that the picture will not be shown in the neighborhood theaters at so-called movie prices.

During the run of "Over the Hill" on upper Broadway, a company on Fourteenth Street revived the stock version of the poem, charging a dollar for seats, and thus presenting the unusual spectacle of stage and camera performances of the same piece in town at the same time, with the picture at double the price charged for the play. Which suggests to me that it might be an interesting experiment, and possibly a profitable one, for the Famous Players, say, which has already made more than one essay in play-producing, to launch films and speaking actors on Broadway simultaneously at the same prices in neighboring theaters. The result might be illuminating in more than one direction. If any one were inclined to object to the same charge for the celluloid as for the living performers, the retort could be made that the additional scenes offered in the movie version made up the difference.

As a straw in the wind that may indicate the possible result of such an innovation, news has just come to hand of the stranding of a "Way Down East" company while making an attempt to trade on the popularity achieved by the screen representation of the piece.

THE SEASON'S BIGGEST THRILL

Not until I realized that it had nothing to do with a bird, but was concerned with an aviation accident, did I awake to interest in "The Broken Wing," billed to succeed "Opportunity" at the Forty-Eighth Street Theater. Now that I have seen this new comedy-drama by Paul Dickey and Charles W. Goddard, authors of "The Misleading Lady," I do not look for another change of bill at this house during the season.

The third show of the theatrical year to carry Mexican atmosphere, it is the first to bring a real twenty-carat physical thrill to an audience. This ensues when an airplane, disabled in a thunder-storm, falls to earth and crashes through the side of a house whose interior forms the setting for the first act. It's a corking effect, strong enough to carry a much weaker play than "The Broken Wing."

Happily there is no occasion to rely on toppling walls to insure favor for this tale of a Mexican girl's love for the gringo whom she believes to have been sent to her straight from heaven in answer to her prayer for a husband who shall not be a greaser. Complications are furnished by the fallen aviator's temporary loss of memory, and by *Inez's* pseudo-engagement to a Mexican captain, cleverly played by Alphonse Ethier. Just as the audience thinks all is over, with a sad future facing poor *Inez*, there comes a surprise almost of "Bat" proportions, adding mystery to the other ingredients that go to make this production by Sargent Aborn—hitherto associated with light operas—a real buy in the box-office market.

A FAILURE AND A SUCCESS

It would be interesting to know what impression "The Young Visitors" would make on a playgoer who chanced to stray into the theater without having read the Daisy Ashford book, and knowing nothing whatever about it. It is just possible that he might fancy himself in the auditorium of some madhouse, in which the patients were entertaining one another with private theatricals.

From this you are not to infer that William A. Brady's American production of the famous juvenile novel was not in the main skilfully done. From the first note of the overture—the scales as a child would practise them—to the "ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" dance in the sixteenth scene, no irrelevant touch had been laid on this curious tale by a child of nine, which attracted so much attention when published as a book in 1919. Harold Anstruther, of the London cast, came over for *Bernard Clark* and achieved the hit of the big company; but nearly all the players were up to the requirements, with the exception of Marie Goff, as *Ethel*, who so overemphasized her rôle as to put it quite out of key with the others. Leslie Palmer made a most affable *Prince*, and licked his ice-cream cone as to the manner born.

Perhaps, after all, the biggest hit was made by the scenic "investment," as Daisy would doubtless have phrased it. The cut-out railroad-trains and cabs were not only screamingly funny, but of material assistance in speeding up the traffic of a piece that approached a one-reel movie in the number of its changes of scene.



EDNA HIBBARD, LEADING WOMAN WITH HOLBROOK BLINN IN THE COMEDY SUCCESS,
"THE BAD MAN"

From her latest photograph by Edward Thayer Monroe, New York



JANE RICHARDSON, WHO WAS LEADING WOMAN IN "PITTER-PATTER," FOR ITS FIRST THREE MONTHS, AND WHO IS SOON TO APPEAR IN A NEW MUSICAL COMEDY

From a photograph by the Royal Atelier, New York

However, there are evidently not so many Daisy Ashford fans as the management hoped, for "The Young Visitors" was withdrawn after only a fortnight's run. Its fate thus verified the sarcastic remark of the *Variety* reviewer, who observed that "a point against its success was the pleasure the critics took in the production."

Following "Mecca" so soon with "Affgar," it might be supposed that Comstock & Gest had already broken their promise to make the first-named the last great spectacle they would ever produce. But "Affgar," while its decorations and costumes were designed by the world-famed Paul Poiret, is not primarily a spectacle, but, as

the program states, "an intimate musical extravaganza," serving principally as a vehicle to introduce a captivating French actress, Alice Delysia, and a new English comedian, Lupino Lane, whose legs are his fortune. The music is by Charles Cuvillier, whom we know through "The Lilac Domino," with additional songs by Tierney and McCarthy, of "Irene," now in its second year of consecutive New York playing.

"Afgar" comes to us with a long record in Paris and London behind it, and judging by the size and attitude of the second-night audience at the Central, I see no reason to doubt that it will achieve equal success in New York. Delysia not only possesses the French *chic* which we look for and do not always find in players from Paris, but a sense of humor that takes the sting out of many a scene which would otherwise pall through its triteness.

THE CONTRADICTION OF "JIMMIE"

Arthur Hammerstein's "Jimmie" lives up to its classification—"musicomedy"—in being the wildest hotchpotch of the season. For instance, there's its star, Frances White, of the erstwhile dance team of Rock and White, cast in a lost-daughter rôle of the emotional type, with Ben Welch, just out of burlesque, for her father à la Dave Warfield. Then there's some violin music which can scarcely have a strong appeal to those who enjoy watching Harry Delf's practical demonstration of various methods of eating soup, while he in turn seems a bit out of place in a story with the serious aspirations of "Jimmie."

Even the title is misleading, for *Jimmie* is not a boy, but a girl. Thus, you see, the audience is in a constant state of readjusting itself, and it's small wonder that it comes away with rather uncertain impressions of the entertainment it has been witnessing. Much of the music by Herbert Stothart, who leads the orchestra, is pleasant to listen to, and Miss White does not permit her acting aspirations to hinder her from introducing a trio of her well-known specialties.

"THE SKIN GAME" GETS UNDER THE SKIN

Of the three London successes to reach Broadway thus far this season, John Galsworthy's "The Skin Game" is the most satisfying. "Paddy the Next Best Thing" speedily disappeared from the boards, while "Happy-Go-Lucky" has found in Chicago

the response it failed to arouse in New York.

Of the trio, "The Skin Game" is the most serious piece of work. Essentially English in setting and atmosphere, many have declared they see in it a symbolic representation of the great war, although in content it is wholly a drama of class distinctions in a quiet part of rural England. The author classifies it as tragicomedy, and has not been afraid of giving it an unhappy ending, which leaves a powerful impression on the spectator's mind.

The theme is of a newcomer to the neighborhood who is ignored socially by the squire's family, and who retaliates by planning to deface the countryside with factory-buildings. Just when the power of money is winning the fight for him, he is halted by the squire's wife, who unearths and threatens to expose the shady past of his daughter-in-law. The struggle ends in sorrow to all concerned in it, and satisfaction to nobody.

The play is a bit overwritten in its earlier portions, and somewhat unevenly acted. Herbert Lomas, however, does great work as the interloping manufacturer, while Josephine Victor rises to the strong moments of the unfortunate *Chloe* without unnecessary elevation of voice. I wish as much could be said for the young woman who plays *Jill*, the squire's daughter, for she assaults the ear-drums of the audience with painful persistency.

A DOUBLE PORTION OF MADGE KENNEDY

Madge Kennedy returns from the screen in a comedy-drama which the critics insist is not even up to film requirements. "Old stuff!" is their cry, sugared with flattering words for the work of the star, who in "Cornered" has a dual rôle of the sort which delights the average theatergoer, but which it is evidently bad form to applaud. However, I'm not ashamed to say that I enjoyed this crook-society play by Dodson Mitchell, and so, apparently, did everybody else gathered in the Astor for the second performance. I'll admit that most of the tricks are taken out of the same old bag, and I could wish that criminals would invent a whole new code of slang to replace the phrases that theatrical use has worn threadbare; but I was kept on the alert throughout the four acts, and if that isn't what one goes to the play for, I'd like some one to name a better reason.

Light Verse

THE SEDENTARY SPORT

HIS fun is all vicarious;
He never takes a hand,
But watches contests various
From somewhere in the stand.
At golf he's just the gallery,
While others drive with vim;
The baseball-player's salary
Is paid by folks like him.

The science pugilistical
He very greatly loves;
He knows its cunning mystical,
But doesn't don the gloves.
When billiard sharps amazingly
Reveal what they can do,
He views their skill appraisingly,
But never wields a cue.

Can anything be hollower
Than life of such a sort—
Than being but a follower,
A looker-on at sport?
I'd rather be a devotee
Of ping-pong all my days,
A dub, a mark for levity,
But who gets in—and plays!

Berton Braley

GRANDMOTHER

WITHIN my memory she strays
In kerchief white and gown of gray;
The Quaker cap of olden days
In yellowed folds is laid away.
Her glasses, like a golden crown,
Unused upon her forehead stay.

The chest she gave still holds the scent
Of sandalwood and lavender;
When from her father's home she went,
Her grandam gave that chest to her;
A bridal gown, a baby's shoe,
Sleep in its dim, sweet sepulcher.

There came to me from her dear hand
All treasures that my childhood knew—
Stories and cookies at demand,
Locket and cherished sash of blue.
I took and did not understand
That each day life was taking, too.

I wish that I might tread once more
The olden, golden childhood way,
And find her sitting in the door
Beneath the white syringa spray!
Oh, grandmother, now I am grown,
How very much we'd have to say!

Edna Valentine Trapnell

MODERN SWEETHEARTS

"THERE is no love nowadays!"
Why, how can you say such a thing?
The boys have different ways,
That's all, in their sweethearting,
And the girls are more like boys
Than they used to be—
All the better for that, if you ask me!
Sweet Alice, Ben Bolt—bless her heart!—
Trembles no more at your frowns;
But they're girls just the same,
Don't you fear,
In spite of their tailor-made gowns!

Girls! I should say—let them box,
Fence, and swim and play ball,
They're none the less crazy for frocks,
And they're flowers, just the same, after all!
But beneath all their frills and fallals,
They were never more tender and true,
They were never more comrades and pals,
More mothers and sisters, too.
Of course, they're not proper and prim,
As their grandmothers used to be;
But surely we're all glad of that,
Even fogies like you and me!

It's true they don't simper and mince
And curtsy like Mistress Prue;
They walk as if they had legs—
A sensible thing to do,
And, between us, quite beautiful, too!
And they talk as they walk,
With a dash and a devil-may-care—
To me very taking, I swear;
Not ladylike dictionary words,
But slang, too often, I fear—
Yes, the living and laughing slang;
Yet I own it sounds to my ear
Just as pretty as if they sang—
Oh, a thousand times sweeter than birds!

And as to their ways of loving,
Never mind! Though the fashions change,
The face of the girl, as always it did,
To the boy seems holy and strange;
And though, to your way of thinking,
They may lack the antique style,
Watch him her beauty drinking—
And just you watch her smile!

Nicholas Breton

THE PARTING—A MEMORY

THAT parting! It was years ago.
It ne'er can be again, I know—
A sad, sad thought! I would to-day
Rejoice to view that narrow way
Gleaming beneath the morning light
As it was then, so clear and white.

'Tis now a plain—and one might say
The path's become a broad highway
Where none can part, thence this I scrawl—
I'm bald as any billiard-ball!

Tudor Jenks

SOURCES

I WANTED a car, so did Mabel—
To keep up our end without one
We found we were wholly unable;
Besides, you can't live without fun.
And so it was bought, and not paid for;
But this caused no worry or fretting,
Because, though extended, to pay I intended
With the money I counted on getting.

A house in the country for summer
Was needful, I think you'll admit;
I found one—a regular hummer—
We both were delighted with it.
And so it was purchased instanter,
On mortgage—the plan has its merit.
The interest amounted quite high, but I counted
On the money I thought I'd inherit.

My family is large and still growing,
And ready for three meals a day;
Now, though I'm not given to blowing,
With truth I may venture to say
I feed them and house them in manner
Precluding all reason for moping.
You ask explanations? I pay for their rations
With the money for which I am hoping.

Wilford Wallington

D. S. C.

YOU won it in the Argonne? Well,
Of that you well may boast!
The fighting there, as I've heard tell,
Against the German host
Was of the fiercest of the war,
To make the bravest faint,
To test men's temper to the core,
And show the craven taint.

You won it in the Argonne? Yes,
Just now you mentioned it,
And as I told you, I confess
You well may boast a bit.
But now we've finished with those days
Of war, that none might shirk,
And having given you due praise,
We look to you for—work!

You won it in the Argonne? Say,
You've told me that now thrice;
When virtue one exploits that way,
It almost seems a vice.
For, having won the cross, you've got
To prove each-day that you
Have kept it free from stain or blot,
And win it thus anew!

William Wallace Whitlock

AUTO-SUGGESTION

JIMMY wasn't popular—cannot tell you why.
All the maidens snubbed him and were blind
when he passed by.

Jimmy's uncle died one day—left a little cash;
Jimmy bought an auto. My, but he was rash!

Now it's "Jimmy this" and "Jimmy that" and
"Jimmy, come to tea!"

You haven't called for *such* a while! What *can*
the reason be?"

He's no prettier or wittier, so far as I can see;
Then what can be the secret of his popularity?

Girls spring up all around him, like mushrooms in
a field.

"Now isn't that the *sweetest* car?" Jimmy, your
doom is sealed!

For it's "Jimmy this" and "Jimmy that," and
"Jimmy, come to tea!"

You haven't called for *such* an age! What *can*
the reason be?"

Minna B. Noyes

A FILMY FAMILY

MY dad has gone away somewhere
To write scenarios;
My mother is a movie star
And sets the style in clothes.
My wife has left my bed and board,
Alack, alas, to be
A dashing motion-picture vamp
Of great celebrity.

My daughter, too, upon the screen
Displays her Pickford curls;
My son, a camera cowboy now,
A lariat deftly whirls;
And since I am deserted thus
By all my family, lo,
I think that I had better start
A motion-picture show!

Grant Paulding

The Odd Measure

The United States as a Field for Exploration

Our Overland Trails, Our Coasts, Our Rivers, Offer Countless Novel Sights and Adventures

THERE are no fewer than four main thoroughfares that lead from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, all available for automobile touring. Intersecting roadways enable one to swing north or south, as from Ely, Nevada, down through Bakersfield into Los Angeles, instead of running west into San Francisco; or one may cut northerly out of Kansas City from the old Santa Fé Trail into the Yellowstone Trail. A young couple, seeking the rest cure for nerves, drove their flivver, burdened with a camping-outfit, from coast to coast, and up and down, till their speedometer measured ninety thousand miles and their nerves were as tranquil as a honey-fed grizzly's.

The national waterways provide trips as wonderful and diverse as the automobile routes. The lower Colorado offers a rarely fascinating cruise through deserts and weird mountain regions, while the upper Colorado has been followed down only two or three times, and is still the great river adventure of the continent. There are ten or fifteen thousand miles of motor-boat and skiff cruises from Fort Benton, on the headwaters of the Missouri, to the Gulf of Mexico, and up a hundred or so tributaries of the wonderful Mississippi River system. Canoeing and skiffing on the Catawba, Holston, Milk, Cannonball, Little Missouri, Fox, Wabash, and countless other American streams will be found to abound in interesting and diversified experiences.

Our coasts, especially the Northwestern and the Eastern, with their expanses of open water and their long miles of ocean inlets, offer the stern rigors of salt-water trials of skill and strength afloat. Some few fortunate thousands follow the migrating birds along the coastal waterways. All along the vast semicircle of the Gulf of Mexico there are wide stretches of little-known back country. People who have traveled for a decade, looking into the byways of the United States, have found themselves more and more amazed by their constant discovery of the strange, the beautiful, and the unique.

* * * * *

Discipline in the Forest and the Desert

The Law's Increasingly Strict Restraint of Recklessness

DISCIPLINE has entered the wilderness. Laws have taken the place of freebooting, and a thousand regulations hem in the would-be adventurer. The prospector for minerals may still kill certain game, even out of the season, if he needs it; but the trapper must first go to the State to obtain a fur-taker's license, and a hunter must be acquainted with the game laws. What the old-timers made their reputation by slaughtering, the modern sportsman finds hemmed in by stringent statutes, so that to kill a mountain goat, a bighorn, a buffalo, or even a beaver, is to incur the opprobrium that clings to the lawbreaker.

The woods are no longer free to the careless adventurer. On all the trails the green signs of the Forest Service mark the boundaries of national parks, national monuments, and national forest preserves. Certain places are prescribed for camps, and detailed regulations determine the exact place for building the camp-fire, lest a billion feet of valuable timber be destroyed by some fool's recklessness.

When one sallies forth, these days, for the enjoyment of outdoor life, whether fishing, hunting, camping, or even exploring, a little study of the laws is indispensable. The national and State regulations are codified in convenient pamphlets. One cannot safely go into the national forests without the "Use Book," comprising one hundred and sixty-eight pages of

excellent and necessary instructions. Nowhere may one take game or fish, except of certain kinds, sizes, and ages.

The deserts themselves are placarded nowadays. Certain trails are forbidden at certain seasons, lest unwary tourists should find themselves trapped in an alkali inferno. The long way round is often safest—as in the desert region west of Salt Lake City, which was once the bottom of old Lake Bonneville.

Game, fish, forest, and desert laws are undoubtedly beneficial and necessary; but the fact that they are needed is a not altogether pleasant commentary on the people whose recklessness and destructive instincts must be restrained.

* * * * *

The High Cost of Smoky Chimneys

*In Pittsburgh
Alone It Is
Estimated at
Ten Million
Dollars a Year*

AN anonymous donor, eight years ago, presented funds to the Mellon Institute of Industrial Research, a department of the University of Pittsburgh, for the purpose of carrying out a thorough investigation of the nature and extent of the damage and losses arising from smoke in and around the great steel-making center. The causes of the smoke nuisance, and possible remedies for it, were included in the scope of the inquiry. A staff of twenty-eight specialists was organized for the purpose, and from the fact that among these experts were eight physicians and surgeons, five architects, four engineers, two chemists, two economists, a meteorologist, a bacteriologist, a physicist, and an attorney, it may be assumed that the investigation was the most exhaustive ever attempted on the smoke problem in towns.

A bulletin published by the investigators, entitled "The Economic Cost of the Smoke Nuisance in Pittsburgh," gives an estimate of the losses due to smoke in that city, as computed by the Economic Division, headed by Mr. J. J. O'Connor. The total annual loss is put down at approximately ten million dollars, distributed as follows:

Cost to the smoke-maker by imperfect combustion of fuel.....	\$1,500,000
Cost to the individual—laundry and dry-cleaning.....	2,250,000
Cost to retail stores—cleaning, lighting, and depreciation of stock.....	3,600,000
Cost to householder—painting and decorating.....	2,300,000
Cost to hotels, hospitals, <i>et cetera</i>	160,000

This estimate covers the loss in one American city, the population of which by the census of last year was a little less than six hundred thousand. Calculating the loss per head, it equals about seventeen dollars a year for every man, woman, and child in Pittsburgh, or about eighty-five dollars a year for each average family. These authoritative figures show the need for smoke-abatement committees in all our great industrial centers.

* * * * *

A Strange People in the Canadian Northwest

*The Doukhobors,
Who Have Always
Maintained a Sort
of Soviet Rule*

THE Doukhobors—"Dukhobortsy" appears to be a more correct Russian form, but "Douks" is their familiar appellation in Canada—are said to be reacting to the communistic upheaval in Russia. While they now owe allegiance to George V, it seems that they have been deeply stirred by the news from their old home in regions adjacent to the Black Sea.

The Doukhobors are members of a sect which first arose in southern Russia about 1740. Being strong in the doctrines of non-resistance and opposition to military conscription, they repeatedly came into conflict with the Czarist régime, and finally obtained permission from the Canadian government to settle a large tract of land in the Yorkton district of Saskatchewan. In 1898, under the guiding influence of Professor James Mavor, of Toronto University, more than seven thousand of them migrated to their new home. They settled in compact villages under a sort of soviet rule, each group of villagers holding land in common, working it in com-

mon, and buying their supplies on the cooperative plan. As they worked very hard and lived very simply, money soon began to accumulate, and their credit was good in the banks of Winnipeg.

Their Canadian neighbors looked on tolerantly for a while, but soon the cry was raised that Doukhobor methods were an affront to Anglo-Saxon ideas, and that these peculiar people must leave Saskatchewan. Under the leadership of Peter Verigin, a large body of them trekked to the lower Kootenay River, in British Columbia, and bought a tract of land between Grand Forks and Brilliant, where to-day the tireless Doukhobor women, with white kerchiefs upon their heads, are to be seen working at their fruit-farms and gardens. They still adhere to communism, live in large wooden houses with common dining-rooms and large dormitories, and have their own cooperative jam-factory at Grand Forks. They resent all government interference, and object to the intrusions of the census officer and the education officer; but crime of the ordinary petty sort is practically unknown among them.

Occasionally individual members break away from the communistic circle and are absorbed among the gentiles; and in spite of the pacificism inculcated by their creed, it is on record that eighty recruits to the Canadian army from Saskatchewan described themselves as Doukhobors. They are a more or less difficult people for a government to deal with, but Canada is spacious and usually tolerant.

* * * * *

When the World Is Moneyless

*Possible Results
of Lenin's Latest
Panacea for
Human Ills*

HAVING pretty thoroughly abolished Russia, Mr. Lenin now proposes to abolish money. Poets and bankrupts in general will doubtless turn a kindly eye upon his experiment, and to all who suffer from *Falstaff's* "disease of the purse," the news will sound good. One may leave bankers and other financial technicians to deal with the practical issue. They will probably agree with the philosopher, and no little to their satisfaction, that the affairs of Russia are very evidently in the hands of a child. A dangerous, demented child, maybe—but still a child. Behold this blood-stained dreamer cometh!

Aside, of course, from its practical impossibility, the dream of the Russian Robespierre is not without its appeal to the romantic imagination. Once more city sites are to be bought, like the site of ancient Rome, for "a bull's hide." The old original meaning of money, *pecunia*, is to be restored, and the farmer shall drive his flock, *pecus*, into the town, to exchange it for a Rolls-Royce; and two or three dozen fresh eggs shall buy a Victrola or a vacuum cleaner. Sea-shells and wild flowers shall once more be currency. A rose shall buy a beefsteak, and a mutton chop shall cost you a spray of lilac.

Beautiful women, we doubt not, will be able to go into a Fifth Avenue store and adorn themselves to their hearts' desire in exchange for a smile. Seven smiles will be their maximum. Artists and poets will never starve again. Your violinist, after the manner of Orpheus, need but draw his bow across the strings, and merchants of every variety will follow him, eager to present him with their wares. As to the poet—are not two sonnets worth more than a fur coat, and shall the most expensive dinner cost him more than a quatrain? A ballade will pay his month's rent, and he may have electricity and telephone thrown in for a mere villanelle. Indeed, with Mr. Lenin, though he recks it not, the old Saturnian reign, which Vergil prophesied for Augustus, may come again.

Money being proverbially the root of all evil, it is evident that to abolish money will be to abolish evil. Sorrow and sin, let us hope, will disappear with the cash register, and man will return to that state of innocence which preceded coinage. With empty pockets, it is evident that man can do no wrong. We may confess that the penniless have not always

seemed happy. It is hard to be penny wise when those around us are pound foolish. But, perhaps when we are all penniless together, it may be different!

* * * * *

The Story of a Parisian Celebrity

*How Père la
Cerise Won a
Fortune and a
Nickname*

A SHABBY, haggard, incredibly dirty old man sat on a bench in the Jardin des Tuileries, engaged in the rather startling occupation of counting what seemed to be innumerable bank-notes into a greasy sack. A *flic*—which is the French for “fly cop”—saw him, wondered, scratched his head, and, following the principle of “when in doubt, play safe,” conducted the suspicious character to the nearest police-station, money-bag and all. It is related that the prisoner went along without sign of protest, and with a tolerant smile from under shaggy mustache and brows for the well-meaning but unknowing guardian of the peace. At the station-house he explained just how it happened that a fortune of more than a hundred thousand francs had come to him from the *pari-mutuel* at the races; and his story was so clear and convincing that he was soon bowed out, a free man and instantly a Parisian celebrity.

What name was his in the days of his obscurity as a ragman and pedler is of no moment, besides being a secret most considerably guarded by the police. Now he is known as *Père la Cerise*—which literally means “Father Cherry,” but which may be more idiomatically translated as “Old Man Good Luck.” Bad luck, which so commonly attends the ambitious bettor, is whisperingly called in the slang of the French race-tracks “*la guigne*”—the sour, black, wild cherry, which it is distinctly unpleasant to taste raw. The ragged old man had tasted quite a different kind of cherry; hence his euphonious nickname.

The avalanche of notoriety which followed upon his visit to the police-station disturbed *Père la Cerise* so greatly that he felt himself forced to disappear, in order to escape armies of supplicants for tips on the races. Some vow they have since recognized him at the haunts of equestrian sport, despite shave, hair-cut, and the newest of good clothes. But it would be more in accord with the psychology of his kind of Frenchman if he had bought a little house and plot in a suburb, invested the rest of his winnings in government bonds, and resolved to devote his life henceforth to the raising of rabbits and cabbages.

* * * * *

“The Old House in College Green”

*Dublin's Parliament
Building May Once
More House a
Legislature*

“CURRAN, what do they mean to do with that useless building? For my part, I hate the sight of it!” said an Irish lord to the great Irish orator a hundred and twenty years ago, referring to the House of Parliament in Dublin after the union with Great Britain had been voted.

“I never yet heard of a murderer who was not afraid of a ghost,” was Curran's reply.

To-day the British government, repealing the union, is eager that the new legislature for the southern and larger of the two Irish states, if and when it starts business, should meet in the old Parliament House in College Green, now the Bank of Ireland. After the Act of Union went into effect on the first day of the nineteenth century, the building was used for a time as a military barrack, as a concert hall, and as an art-gallery. It was offered to Trinity College for twenty thousand pounds, but in the following year (1802) it was bought by the governors of the Bank of Ireland for twice that price. Among the papers of Lord Colchester, who was then the Irish secretary, there is a despatch to Lord Pelham containing the following:

I am given to understand, confidentially, that the Bank of Ireland would in such case subdivide what was the former House of Commons into several rooms for check offices, and would apply what was the House of Lords to some other use which would leave nothing of its former appearance.

The stipulation with regard to the House of Commons was observed, but the House of Lords remains pretty much as it was a hundred and twenty years ago.

From the reign of Elizabeth, Irish parliaments met in Dublin. The Parliament House in College Green was begun in 1727, and cost, when completed, forty thousand pounds, a large sum for those days. Its architect was Sir Edward Lovat Pearce, himself a member of the Irish Commons. Arthur Young, the traveler, who saw it in 1776, said it was "much beyond that heap of confusion at Westminster"—referring to the old Houses of Parliament in London, which were destroyed by fire in 1834.

The sentiment of the Irish people has always clung to the building in College Green. As Isaac Butt, the father of the modern Home Rule movement, said more than forty years ago, "whenever in any country or in any clime there is an Irishman who has a pride in the glories of his country, his heart turns in passionate remembrance to that Senate House—the Senate House which he fondly remembers as 'the old house in College Green.'"

* * * * *

Another
New Word of
Evil Omen

*"Class-Conscious"
Is a Sinister
Negation of
Democracy*

WE recently remarked on the magic power for good or ill of a single word, giving as an example the world-wide dilemmas set afoot by Mr. Wilson's pronouncing of the spell-word "self-determination." There is another word which our friends the socialists are fond of using, and which it had perhaps been better to leave unsaid—"class-conscious."

When Miss Sylvia Pankhurst was recently convicted of conspiring to corrupt the loyalty of the British tar, she lamented the fact that he was not yet "class-conscious." Long may that healthy unconsciousness be his! Six months in jail seems all too short a sentence for this feminine sower of dragons' teeth.

It is surely the most glaring of illogicalities that those whose professed aim is the establishment of universal equality—which, if it means anything, means the absence of class distinctions—should begin by an appeal to the very spirit they pretend to abjure. To do this is merely to magnify and embitter distinctions which, in the general spread of democracy, have for some generations been quietly disappearing, with the result of a very genuine approach to "the brotherhood of man." In a world where bell-boys have become "gentlemen," and gentlemen even as bell-boys, the old distinction between the classes and the masses may surely be said to have reached the vanishing-point. There is little more to be done in America, at least, in the social equalization of citizens. With the arrival of the "scrublady," who can deny that we have once more returned to that paraisal state celebrated in the old English distich:

When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?

When what were formerly known as the "upper classes" have already handed in their humble and repentant abdication, to stimulate "class-consciousness" among those members of society who have previously been free from that taint of exclusiveness is merely to attempt the creation of an inverted aristocracy, and to be the enemy of the people at large as much as any oligarch or anarch. Such dangerous employers of inflammable phrases must not be surprised if, by their awakening "class-consciousness" in those previously unconscious of class, they give new life to those old social distinctions which have long been peaceably dying out. As of old, it will still take all sorts to make a world, and if one sort determines to dominate the rest, it will only repeat the old mistakes of history on a larger and bloodier scale, and once more demonstrate the truth of Carlyle's census of the population of our planet—"mostly fools."

The Brains of the Family^{*}

A SIDE-SPLITTING DOMESTIC COMEDY

By E. J. Rath

Author of "The Flying Courtship," "Good References," "Too Much Efficiency," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY IRMA DEREMEAUX

XV

THE kissing of Henrietta and Barbara may have had no influence whatever upon the course of events at Payne's Island, yet the double affair undoubtedly constituted a point of departure. It marked a date from which things could be reckoned. It may not have been a malign cause of changes, but there were changes, nevertheless; so that nobody could have failed to note a coincidence, if nothing more.

It was on that date, for instance, that the noises were first mentioned. It developed immediately that the noises had been heard prior to the kissing, but nobody had spoken about them.

But before reaching the noises, there are other matters—the case of Barbara, for instance. She recovered from her tears, and all the redness went out of her eyes, after she bathed them in cold water; but she did not recover from her rage. The heat went out of it, but she carried it in her breast like a lump of ice—ice that never melted.

She told nobody about it; that would have meant humiliation. Besides, it would have seemed like an appeal for help, and she wanted none. She still felt capable of handling the affair herself. After a final outburst of passion in the solitude of her room, she calmed herself wonderfully. The outburst was:

"If Jerry Lane had kissed Henrietta when he thought somebody was looking, just deliberately to have it talked about—for some sort of purpose—that would be one thing; but he never dreamed that anybody was watching. He just—kissed her! And then

he came to me—with the thing on his lips—and I asked him for it! It's unbelievably horrible!"

After that she became dangerously placid and self-controlled. She even met Jerry an hour or two afterward, in the presence of the family, and exchanged words that were friendly, if casual. There was only one thing of significance—a look that passed between them, which nobody else observed, and which, even if intercepted, could not have been understood save by Barbara and Jerry; but he read it rightly, and he knew there was to be no quarter. Whenever they met after that—she did not try to avoid him—there was never a hint on either side that the fight was to a finish.

Owen's analysis of the newcomer on the island began to attain a wider circulation. Barbara did not help to spread it; that was not in accord with her method. Besides, she had little faith in Owen. Nor did Henrietta repeat it, for Henrietta had become something like a slave to the wishes of Jerry Lane. He was wonderful—and he had promised to help her. But Owen told it to Sabina, who thought it was probably true. She had had faith in the chauffeur's analytical skill ever since he told her she ought to have been a statesman.

Owen also tried to tell it to Jasper, but only part of it filtered into that memory-mad mind. In Ray Lambert, of course, he found an eager listener.

Ray told it to Mr. Warren, in the hope that the presence of a con man on the island would arouse the head of the community to action; but Mr. Warren remained unexcited. He merely nodded his head in a satisfied fashion and declared:

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NOBODY COULD POSSIBLY HAVE SEEN THE SNAKE BUT HENRIETTA; BUT OF COURSE IT HAD TO BE LOOKED FOR, AND THAT TOOK TIME AND WORDS AND REASSURANCES

"I knew he was a salesman."

Mrs. Warren, however, became angry when the helpful information was conveyed to her.

"Mr. Lane is our guest," she said to her husband. "He is a gentleman. Owen is our chauffeur. He is an idiot. Ray Lambert will probably be our son-in-law. I am afraid he is an idiot, too. Phineas, I suggest that you tell him to keep his nonsense to himself. I will speak to Owen myself."

It was on the very day of the double kissing that the first meeting between Henrietta and Ray took place.

Jerry told Ray that Barbara had gone for a walk toward the end of the island;

but the island, of course, had two ends, and Ray got them mixed. Jerry forgot to tell him that Henrietta was at the other end. So it happened that instead of finding Barbara sitting pensively under a tree, Ray discovered that it was only Henrietta.

While he was making a somewhat embarrassed apology for intrusion, he discovered other things. Henrietta's way of looking through her eyelashes—according to the chapter on "Attractive Manner"—for instance. And then, when she started back toward the house, in order not to embarrass him any more, she saw a snake that frightened her. Ray did not see it; nobody could possibly have seen it but Henrietta; but of course it had to be looked for, and

that took time and words and reassurances. A snake with any sense at all would have coiled itself around Henrietta's ankle; but Ray never thought of that, although the ankle was in plain view and he himself saw it.

Altogether, it seemed like a fair start for Henrietta. She displayed artistry and sound judgment, and limited the entire scene to less than ten minutes. Later, Jerry instructed her to let it run to twenty minutes or even half an hour the next time. But if Henrietta had expected to be kissed again, just for being a clever girl, she was disappointed.

The clashing of improvement systems became particularly noticeable at this period. It was chiefly due to Sabina, who, in her vocation as cook, was necessarily the keystone of the community arch. To Jacksonize properly required a great deal of time, and Sabina did not Jacksonize by halves. She might never become a statesman, she realized; but inasmuch as women were getting into politics, she felt that there was still time to join them and become a politician. A half-hour of concentration, morning and afternoon, seemed puerile to Sabina. She took many hours, every day.

The situation would not have been so difficult if her duties had merely demanded the preparation of three regular meals a day; but there had to be a separate set of meals for Phineas Warren and another set for his wife. Sabina found very little time for any of these things. Theoretically, Jacksonism should have increased her efficiency. In Sabina's case, however, it created the need of an assistant. There was none to be had, and the lack of one became speedily apparent at meal-times. An undernourished family rarely succeeds in making satisfactory improvements, and such was the handicap under which the entire Warren household labored.

Phineas became grumpy, and talked about sending to the city for a bottle of pills. Drusilla Warren, ordinarily the most equable of women, was astonished to find herself becoming irritable and sharp of tongue. The fine young appetites of Jasper and Barbara went unsatisfied so often that Jasper remembered nothing but the pains of hunger, while Barbara failed to employ compelling words in a talk with Sabina, and retired in angry defeat. Ray Lambert discovered that there is some subtle relation between food units and will-

power, and that when there is a lack of calories there is a corresponding diminution in the qualities that make men masterful.

Even Jerry Lane was somewhat affected, so far-reaching were the effects of Sabina's studies; but Jerry had accustomed himself to camp cooking, particularly his own, so that he was able to endure privation with greater fortitude than the others.

Yet, despite these obviously unfavorable conditions, the march of improvement on Payne's Island still went stubbornly forward. It became a sort of grim grind, however, rather than a joyous hike in the open. Over the periods of concentration there brooded a spirit of jealousy and hostility, rather than the desired atmosphere of cooperation.

To make matters worse, there were the noises, which first became a matter of furtive allusion and then of open talk. The noises were heard in the bungalow—at night.

So far as could be determined, Henrietta, who was a light sleeper, was the first to hear them. She was very sure that they were on the lower floor. They consisted of footsteps—stealthy footsteps, Henrietta said—and once what sounded like the scraping of a chair.

She paid no particular attention to them on the first occasion, because she thought that Sabina had gone down-stairs for something; but when she mentioned the matter to Sabina the next day, and received a denial, the incident struck her as somewhat mysterious, because she knew that the Warrens were sound sleepers, and were never in the habit of prowling around at night. Later, when Henrietta heard the noises again, she put her head under the bedclothes.

Sabina heard them after that. She did not do any investigating, but she declared stoutly that the noises were not confined wholly to the lower floor, because she heard a creaking on the stairs. Whatever it was, Sabina declared, it was coming up—which, at two o'clock in the morning, was much more scary than if it had been going down. She believed that it was a ghost, and that if the history of the bungalow on Payne's Island were thoroughly investigated some sinister reason for its presence would be revealed. She mentioned the matter to Mr. Warren, who told her not to be a fool.

Owen made an important contribution. He not only heard footsteps and scraping

noises one night, but he vowed that he heard a disturbance of dishes in the kitchen. Sabina said that could not have been possible, because all the dishes were in their places the next morning.

Whatever may have been the exact facts as to that, it remained for Owen to add a light to the noises. He opened the door of his room, he said, and went several steps along the hallway to listen. Looking down the staircase, he said he saw the reflection of a light—a pale light that moved. He did not see the light itself, but merely a part of its dim radiance.

"Why didn't you go down and see where it came from?" demanded Henrietta.

"I couldn't find my shoes," explained Owen; "and if I had been able to find them, I'd have only made a noise and scared it away."

Next Barbara heard the noises, and went so far as to descend the staircase and stand in the lower hall, where she listened for several minutes. She did not observe any light, and she said that from the moment she put foot on the stairs the noises ceased. She looked for footprints under all the windows the following morning, but discovered none. Her father told her never to go down-stairs again in the middle of the night, and Barbara failed to promise.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Warren, who were not an imaginative couple, finally admitted that they had heard noises, too; but in order not to create any alarm in the bungalow, they discouraged talk about the matter. They did not want Barbara and Jasper to lose any sleep over the affair. Mr. Warren said it was probably nothing but the wind, or rats, or some commonplace agency; although Owen reminded Sabina that rats never carried lights, and Sabina said it was well known that ghosts frequently did.

Inasmuch as nothing was ever stolen or even disturbed, the theory that burglars came to the island at night, which was first put forward by Ray Lambert, did not survive long. Perforce it had to give way to a more spooky hypothesis.

Ray and Jasper constituted themselves as a joint watch for one night. Both fell asleep in their chairs in the living-room, and nobody heard any noises. When Mr. Warren found them in the morning, he sent them up-stairs to dress, and gave it as his opinion that the vigil had been an idiotic waste of time.

After that there were sporadic ghost hunts, and one night Barbara herself saw the light; but when she made a hurried dash down-stairs it flickered out and did not reappear, so that she was unable to contribute anything toward a solution of the mystery.

It was only natural, perhaps, that suspicion should direct itself toward Jerry Lane, who stayed on and on as a house guest, and who was thoroughly established in the graces of Mrs. Warren. Owen voiced the suspicion quite frankly, emphasizing again the fact that Jerry was an adverse combination.

It was Henrietta who pointed out with great scorn that, even if he was a con man, he would not be rambling about down-stairs in the middle of the night, where there was nobody to con. Owen said that he might be planning something. Henrietta retorted that he could plan just as well in bed, and much more comfortably; and that Owen was afraid to accuse him to his face, anyhow, and she dared him to.

Despite the volunteered defense by Henrietta, there was a good deal of whispering concerning Jerry Lane and the noises. The fact that he emerged from his room one night when the noises were heard, and encountered Ray Lambert in the upper hall, also on a mission of investigation, did not serve to exculpate him. He was under suspicion on the general ground that nobody knew much about him.

It did not appear that even Mrs. Warren, who had taken a frank liking to him, had made any close inquiries. She accepted him at face value as a gentleman, and she was inclined to resent any insinuation that she might have committed an error of judgment. But because he was so largely an unknown, it became inevitable that he should be associated in some hazy way with the noises, although nobody pretended to divine his purpose, unless it were that of merely alarming the household.

He was, of course, aware of the suspicion; but inasmuch as it was never directly mentioned to him, but was circulated in a more covert manner, all he could do was to smile at it. In fact, that seemed to be all that he desired to do.

Between Barbara and himself the matter was never discussed. Barbara, being of a practical mind, had no theories to advance on the subject of the noises, which only occasionally interfered with her sleep, and

which had thus far failed to disturb her equanimity.

The nocturnal noises ran true to the form established for all mysterious manifestations in isolated houses. Whenever there was an organized hunt for them, there were no noises. Jerry Lane himself spent the greater part of a night on watch, reenforced by Jasper. They played penny ante down-stairs until three in the morning, but neither of them heard any noises. On the following night, however,

ed on searching the house every night for some imaginary ghost, there would be no rest for anybody.

"Suppose it is a ghost," said Mrs. Warren. "It never steals anything, and it



JERRY LANE WAS UNDER SUSPICION ON THE GENERAL GROUND THAT NOBODY KNEW MUCH ABOUT HIM

when everybody went to bed early, there were noises again — footsteps, creaking boards, the sound of a closing door, and other manifestations that had come to be recognized as standard.

The organization of hunting-parties finally became more of a disturbance than the noises themselves. Mrs. Warren was the first to protest, and later she was reenforced by her husband. They had come away from the city to rest, they declared, and one of the best ways to rest was to sleep at night. If the young people insist-

doesn't hurt anybody. The proper way to discourage it is for everybody to stay in bed."

When that was reported to Sabina, she said that such callous indifference to a supernormal manifestation was flying in the face of Providence. However, it was observed that she always stayed in bed herself.

Phineas Warren then attempted to lay down a law against midnight expeditions, which he said bothered him a great deal more than the noises; but as he never stayed up to enforce it, the law was of no effect. It was like Congress making it illegal to possess even a formula for the manufacture of fluid iniquities, but omit-

ting to search the pockets of one hundred and five million people to see whether the law was observed. There are some things that cannot conveniently be done, either by Phineas Warren or the Congress of the United States.

It remained for Jerry Lane to give serious consideration to what, in his private opinion, had become a twin problem of great importance on Payne's Island. Jerry wandered away by himself in order to apply himself to it.

"We have with us," he reflected, "a nice lot of people all going nutty over improvements. The whole island is nothing but a riot of will-power and compelling conversation and memory stunts and character analysis, to say nothing of reformed eating and the science of making people like you. Everybody is studying something out of a little book, and nobody is having a good time. If they don't stop concentrating, they're going to bust their brains. And now there are these noises. Between the improvements and the noises this place is plain Bedlam. I honestly feel that I have a duty to perform. It's a sort of responsibility, because up to now I've been encouraging 'em; but you can't take away their candy without giving 'em a toy to play with. What they need most is a lay-off on improvements; but they mustn't realize that it's a lay-off. So what's the answer?"

He considered the answer for a long time, and finally grinned over it.

"I'll explain that it's a postgraduate course," he said.

XVI

JERRY introduced the matter at the close of the morning concentration period, while the household mind was on the subject of improvements.

"It's a great thing," he said, "to feel that you've accomplished something."

Mrs. Warren nodded, but with no visible emphasis.

"It's worth a lot of grind and hard work to get somewhere," he added, as if thinking aloud.

Phineas Warren looked sidewise at him, but said nothing. He was thinking of food.

"I suppose you'll all finish out the summer at it, no matter how much effort it takes. I wouldn't blame you a bit if you did."

Jerry glanced impersonally from one

member of the group to another, finally reaching Barbara. She was looking at him speculatively, but cautiously refrained from comment.

"You'll all be going in for postgraduate courses, I imagine," continued Jerry.

Phineas and Drusilla exchanged frowns, while Ray Lambert stirred uneasily. Jasper glanced up out of his gloomy mood and gave evidence of apprehension. Only Barbara concealed her feelings.

"I think we're doing about enough," remarked Mr. Warren.

"We've really done a great deal," said his wife. "There's such a thing—well, as attempting too much."

Ray and Jasper nodded automatically.

"Of course," assented Jerry. "On the other hand, however, you wouldn't want to leave a good job only half finished."

Phineas coughed and bit off the end of a cigar.

"I don't think that I've left anything unfinished," he said, without geniality. "If anybody wants to know it, I've been working."

"Even at that, you wouldn't give it all up," remarked Jerry confidently.

Phineas was thinking a wicked thought. He knew in his heart of hearts that he was willing to be a traitor to the ten little books of Dr. Pagan; but he lacked the hardihood to make the revelation.

"I didn't say I wanted to give anything up," he growled. "I only said I'd been working."

"Ever hear of Dr. Bull's system?" asked Jerry.

"No!" answered Phineas sharply.

"It's a great system."

"I shouldn't think we needed any more systems," said Mrs. Warren, frowning again. "I'm sure we're all very busy now."

She glanced at Barbara and Jasper, who reassured her with nods.

"What Dr. Bull?" demanded Ray.

"Jethro Bull," replied Jerry. "He's a scientist."

"What at?"

"On enabling people to attain anything in the world that they desire."

Phineas shook his head almost sternly.

"Not interested!" he said. "Got all I can do. Never could do more than one thing at once."

"Oh, I wasn't going to urge you about it," said Jerry smoothly. "It just struck

me it might be interesting for some of you to top off with it—it's so easy."

Mrs. Warren looked at him quickly.

"Easy?" she repeated.

"Very easy."

"But you see we're so busy now—"

"Yes—I understand. Of course, if you took up Dr. Bull's system, you'd be expected to give up everything else."

There was a stirring of chairs on the porch.

"How's that?" demanded Phineas.

"You couldn't very well put it across unless you gave up other studies. Dr. Bull makes it a hard and fast rule that the mind must not be burdened with outside matters."

"Er—how much study?" inquired Ray.

"None at all," said Jerry.

Phineas whirled about and stared.

"How much—dieting?"

"Why, none, of course."

"I suppose we'd have to concentrate, just the same," said Jasper pessimistically.

"No concentration whatever."

The members of the Warren household again exchanged glances.

"But you say it's a system," remarked Phineas doubtfully; for anything that suggested a system made him suspicious.

"I used an unfortunate word," said Jerry. "It really isn't a system. It could hardly be called a method. Certainly it's not a study. It's really a discovery." There was an interval of silence. "But, of course," he added, "I didn't mean to suggest any interference with your present plans."

"Tell us what it is," said Mrs. Warren firmly.

"Yes," said Phineas.

"There really isn't much to tell," remarked Jerry. "The thing is so darned simple that anybody can do it. All Dr. Bull did was to discover how to activate the subconscious mind."

Barbara was watching him sharply, but said nothing.

"I know that sounds a bit formidable, but it isn't. Jethro Bull, I suppose, is really more of an economist than a scientist. His discovery has more of an economic than a scientific value. I don't need to explain to you, of course, anything about the subconscious mind. We all have it, only in most of us it is simply so much dead wood. It never does any practical work. It dreams a good deal of the time,

and moons around over a lot of impractical thoughts, of which we are never actively conscious. All Dr. Bull did was to find a way to put it to work."

"I thought there'd be work involved!" said Phineas.

"Yes, there's work, of course; but it's all done while you're sound asleep."

"Hey?"

"Between bedtime and getting-up time," affirmed Jerry.

"And what do we do during the day?" inquired Mrs. Warren.

"Nothing—except amuse yourselves, if you wish. You see, when you get the hang of Dr. Bull's discovery, the subconscious mind does it all, and it only does it while you're asleep."

"Does it make you dream?" demanded Jasper.

"It only makes you dream of your heart's desire," replied Jerry, with a glance at Barbara. "That is, if it makes you dream at all. Most of the time it doesn't."

Barbara still refrained from either comment or questions.

"How do we go at this thing?" asked Phineas Warren bluntly.

"I'll tell you, sir—I'll tell you all there is to it. When you go to bed at night, have you ever thought of an hour at which you wish to awake in the morning, and then found that you have awakened at the very time?"

"Anybody can do that," affirmed Phineas.

"Then anybody can make use of Dr. Bull's discovery; only, instead of thinking of what time you want to wake up, you think of something you really want—a good memory, a good digestion, any kind of an improvement. You think of it just before you go to sleep. After that it's entirely up to the subconscious mind. Instead of giving the subconscious mind a trivial little job like waking you up in the morning, you give it something worth while to do."

There was a pause and silence.

"Ever tried this thing yourself?" asked Phineas.

"Yes, indeed."

"And it works?"

"I hate to talk about myself," said Jerry diffidently.

Barbara was contemplatively chewing her lip. There was a distant look in her eyes.

"As I said in the beginning," added Jerry, "the only hard and fast rule that Dr. Bull makes is that the mind must not be burdened with anything else. He found out, somehow or other, that the subconscious mind doesn't act very well if the conscious mind is loaded up with a lot of other things. He wants the mind to be absolutely tranquil and free from worries."

"How long does it take to get what you desire?" inquired Ray.

"That largely depends on what you want." Jerry and Ray were both, for some reason, looking at Barbara. "This isn't any overnight cure-all. I don't want you to get that idea. Often it takes time. You have to get the subconscious mind trained gradually; but, of course, the plan has the advantage of automatically relieving you of a lot of mental strain during the day."



THE ORGANIZATION OF HUNTING-PARTIES FINALLY BECAME MORE OF A DISTURBANCE THAN
THE NOISES THEMSELVES

Mrs. Warren sighed.

"It sounds awfully interesting," was her comment.

"I just mentioned it for what it may be worth," said Jerry modestly.

Presently he arose and strolled off. It occurred to him that Sabina, Owen, and Henrietta ought not to be deprived of Dr. Jethro Bull's famous discovery.

The Warrens and Ray Lambert sat for a while without indulging in conversation. Phineas smoked comfortably. Mrs. Warren picked up her novel and opened it with apparently fresh interest. The young people seemed to be in a reflective mood. It was Phineas who ultimately broke the silence.

"Jasper," he said, "let's go down to the landing and catch something."

Ray asked Barbara if she would go for a walk, and Barbara said no. She wanted to do some more thinking, but she did not tell him that. So Ray went away by himself, and after a while he unexpectedly encountered Henrietta. Although she gave every appearance of being in a hurry to get back to the house, Henrietta contrived to stretch the meeting into nearly half an hour. She was fresh from a revelation concerning the power of the subconscious mind, and they talked about that, among several other things.

Ray was becoming reckless. He did not care whether anybody happened along to witness the interview. If Barbara would not go walking with him, he was willing to have her find out that somebody else would. Nobody was going to accuse him of being a snob, reflected Ray, in self-explanation. It was all a sort of community affair on Payne's Island, anyhow.

Thus came Dr. Bull's great discovery to the island. Jerry Lane volunteered no further information about it. He had sowed the seed; it was for others to reap the harvest. Of course, they asked him a number of questions concerning the matter, all of which he readily answered; but he refrained from propaganda. He felt that it was not necessary.

It was Mrs. Warren who first confided to him that both she and Phineas were going to give Dr. Bull a trial.

"We haven't lost our desire to improve," she assured him; "but it's just what you say—it seems like a postgraduate course, and Phineas and I both think we are ready for it."

"I'm certain of it," agreed Jerry.

"And I wouldn't be surprised if the others took it up, too," said Mrs. Warren. "It seems so—well, so logical."

"That's the great point of it—one of 'em, at any rate."

"And it may"—Mrs. Warren lowered her voice—"it may take their minds off those noises."

"You've been hearing them again?"

"They haven't bothered me—not a bit; but the young folks and the servants keep talking about them. It's all rather silly and annoying. I hope you're not being kept awake at night, Mr. Lane?"

Jerry declared that he had never slept better in his life.

The Bull system became enthroned with a rapidity that was somewhat startling. The first clear sign of its progress was visible in the abandonment of the concentration periods. They were not formally abolished; they simply ceased, and evidently by unanimous consent. There was a general atmosphere of freedom about the island that told Jerry the seed had not fallen upon barren ground. Dr. Bull was at work.

For two days Jerry felt himself an unsung hero. He thought that it would be the right thing for somebody to congratulate him. Unquestionably everybody had brightened up, as if a great but invisible weight had been removed.

That lasted for two days; and then began a subtle change. So subtle was it at first that Jerry himself, who had a quick discernment, was not aware of it until the symptoms became strongly marked. Then it puzzled and disturbed him.

Nobody said anything about Dr. Bull, but it was obvious that the reign of contentment that followed the introduction of his system was drawing to a close. There was no return to concentration, but in its place there came a certain restlessness that Jerry had never before observed. Members of the household were given to periods of irritability and querulousness. There was a perceptible shortening of tempers, even among the mildest-mannered. There was a tendency toward monosyllabic conversation, with an omission of the ordinary courtesies of speech. Small matters frequently became the source of loud and persistent complaints.

This state of things extended to the servants, and particularly to Sabina, who was

developing a temper that kept Owen and Henrietta out of the kitchen. Owen sulked by himself, and threatened to go back to the city. Even Henrietta so far forgot her plans as to speak with sudden sharpness to Ray Lambert, when all he did was to wish her good morning. Yet that was not exactly a misfortune, for it brought an apology from Ray, who was much confused in his mind and did not know exactly why he was apologizing.

The change at last became so pronounced that Jerry spoke to Barbara about it.

"I dare say everybody is bothered about the noises," she said shortly.

It was true that there had been more reports about midnight footfalls and creaking door-hinges; but Jerry shook his head.

"It isn't that, Barbara," he said. "There's something else back of it."

She looked at him coldly.

"Then I imagine you know what it is as well as I," she said. "Why ask me?"

"Then you do know what it is?"

"Certainly!"

"Do you mind telling me?"

She moved her head impatiently.

"Do you mean that you really don't know?" she demanded.

"Absolutely I don't," and Jerry was sincere.

"Well, it's you and that Dr. Jethro Bull system."

She spoke so savagely that he nearly winced.

"Why, that's impossible!" he said.

"That ought to make 'em happy."

"Happy!" she echoed. "Do they act happy?"

"Well, not lately."

"I should say not. If you had only let things alone, everything would have been all right; but you insisted on minding somebody else's business, and here we are—a perfect mess of discontent!"

Jerry pondered the rebuke and shook his head in perplexity.

"I still don't see anything wrong with Dr. Bull," he said.

Barbara's expression became thoroughly fierce.

"I don't want you to think for one moment," she said, "that I ever believed in it. It was all so perfectly absurd—so transparent and shallow. It sounded as if you made it all up as you went along. I haven't wasted my time about it. I wouldn't have you flatter yourself by think-

ing so; but *they* did. They were perfectly ready to believe anything, and you made them believe it."

Barbara clenched her fists tightly and glared at him.

"But they haven't had time to give it a fair try-out," he protested.

"Oh, yes, they have. If they give it much more, they'll all be crazy; and if they go crazy, it's your fault!"

"It couldn't be my fault."

"It could—and it is. And if you don't tell them—"

Jerry raised his hand for silence.

"Get down to earth," he advised.

"You haven't explained yet what's gone wrong."

"Very well, then. If you're so stupid, I'll explain it in language for a child. They're not getting any sleep."

"Sleep?"

"Do you know what insomnia is?" she demanded.

"I've heard of it."

"Well, that's what they've got—every one of them. *Insomnia!* It will set them crazy if they don't get rid of it; and you're responsible!"

"I don't get it yet," he confessed.

"You told them to think of something they desired most just before they went to sleep, didn't you?"

Jerry nodded.

"Well, that's it. Some of them can't think of what they want, and lie awake half the night trying to decide. Those who do know what they want get so worked up over it that they can't go to sleep. If they do go to sleep, they wake up in the middle of the night; and—oh, do you understand what you've done now?"

He looked at her with such a peculiar expression that Barbara did not know whether he was about to laugh or to express his condolences.

"Is this straight?" he demanded.

"I am not in the habit of telling lies," she said icily. "You've got everybody on this island headed for a madhouse; and it's all because of insomnia, I tell you—*insomnia!*"

XVII

BARBARA glared steadily for several seconds. Jerry accepted her attitude with a certain meekness that surprised her. She was tempted to go further; she had other things she wanted to say.



IT OCCURRED TO JERRY THAT SABINA, OWEN, AND HENRIETTA OUGHT NOT TO BE DEPRIVED OF DR. JETHRO BULL'S FAMOUS DISCOVERY

"Well, I'm sorry about the insomnia," he said. "Dr. Bull never meant—"

"For Heaven's sake, stop! I hate liars and hypocrites. When are you going to take yourself away from here?"

"When I've finished my work."

"Your work? What is it? To make trouble for everybody?"

"I've been trying to avoid trouble."

She shook her head furiously.

"Not a word of truth in that," she said.

"Not a word! Everything was going beautifully here until you forced yourself on our hospitality—and then abused it."

"Now, Barbara—"

"There! That's part of it," she flashed.

"You've set yourself up as an intimate of the family, when nobody knows the least thing about you."

"Ah, but they will know."

"They don't want to know. All they want is to be left alone."

"But don't *you* want to know?" he asked mildly.

She answered that with a contemptuous gesture of denial.

"You came here under a false pretense," she added. "You gave my father and mother to understand that you had been the victim of an accident; but I knew better from the very beginning."

"Then why didn't you tell them?"

"Because—never mind my reasons. All I want you to do is to take your canoe and get out of here."

Jerry smiled indulgently, as if she had forgotten something.

"I'm afraid it won't navigate," he said.

"Oh, yes, it will! I've seen to that. It has been repaired. Owen managed to make a very fair job of it."

"That's what I call being thoughtful."

"You'll find it down at the landing, with both paddles in it. And your camp is waiting for you."

"Oh! You know about the camp, do you?"

"I've seen it."

She looked at him triumphantly.

"Been investigating, have you?"

"Naturally. Why not? I took your canoe and I found your camp. It was all a lie about losing your outfit. I knew that from the beginning, but I wanted to prove it. There has never been the slightest excuse for your being on this island, and I don't propose to tolerate it for one day longer."

Jerry smiled slowly.

"How is the little old camp, anyhow?" he asked. "See anything of Chip?"

Barbara ignored the question.

"Do you intend to go peacefully?" she demanded.

"You must have been mighty curious about me, to investigate my camp," he mused. "Did you go inside the tent?"

"Do you think I'm a burglar?"

"I've been wondering if some of my stuff was all right. Chip has a way of poking into everything, even when I'm around. I left a rather valuable camera lying around—"

"You will find your camera safe," she said, interrupting.

"That reassures me." Jerry looked up with a grin. "So you did go into the tent, didn't you?"

Barbara bit her lip in vexation.

"I—looked in," she admitted.

"The camera was under my blanket, to keep it dry."

"You are absolutely detestable," said Barbara. "If I made an investigation, it was because I thought it advisable. Why, you have been here for days and days, and have never even thought it necessary to explain yourself."

"But I'm going to—pretty soon."

She was tempted to ask a question. She was dying to ask it; but she managed to check it.

"I'll give you just twenty-four hours," she said. "Up to the present time I have kept my opinions to myself; but after that I shall be compelled to tell my father ex-

actly how you have imposed upon us. If there is one thing my father hates, it is a person who travels under false colors. If you don't leave here of your own accord, he will see to it that you do. I don't imagine you would care to have him communicate with New York."

Jerry pondered that for a moment.

"So you went through my papers, too?" he said.

"I went through everything I could find," she retorted defiantly.

"Own up that you're awfully interested in me."

Barbara stamped a foot and looked dangerous.

"There isn't much in the papers," he added. "I can tell you a lot more—when the time comes."

"Are you going to leave here?" she demanded.

"After I get what I want—yes."

"Oh, I'm sure you can have that, just for the asking!"

She replaced a runaway wisp of hair, and gave him a look that was intended to combine ridicule and scorn.

"I'll confess that you surprise me," said Jerry. "I'd no idea it was so easy."

"It seems to have been. I think you can fairly lay claim to a conquest, Mr. Lane."

"No!"

"Rather, yes, indeed. Henrietta is more impressionable than I believed."

He lifted his eyebrows at that.

"Oh, I see—Henrietta," he said. "Well, Henrietta's a superior girl."

"A very good maid," she conceded.

"We'll be rather sorry to lose her."

"You'll admit that she's amiable, too—and pretty."

"I admit it freely."

"She has a lot of good points," he went on. "The thing that attracts me most in the case of Henrietta is her absolute frankness and sincerity. She never tries to mask her real feelings."

Barbara looked doubtful, but she made no open denial.

"If Henrietta is interested in you, she lets you know it," said Jerry. "If she likes you, she says so. If she loves you—"

"She kisses you," supplied Barbara.

He nodded and smiled reminiscently.

"She kisses very well," he conceded.

Barbara's eyes narrowed. So it had happened again, had it?

"Offhand, I'd say she kisses as well as any girl I ever met," added Jerry. "She's not a hypocrite about it. She's willing to do a girl's part. She's not what I'd call a mere passive receiver; that's the indolent, indifferent type. Nor is she the type who receives and then makes a violent display of protest. That's the insincere kind. Most girls like to be kissed, but not all of them have the courage of their convictions. They either protest or pussyfoot."

Barbara felt herself growing angry, but what disturbed her more was the fear that her cheeks would show it.

"The queer thing about girls, as I have met them," he continued in a thoughtful tone, "is that the only one who was ever really deeply attracted to me makes the most elaborate and violent attempts to conceal the fact. Have you any idea why she should do that?"

He looked at her so impersonally that Barbara almost lost self-control.

"Perhaps," she said coldly, "the girl is entirely sincere, and you are making an egotistical blunder."

Jerry shook his head stubbornly.

"No; that's not the answer. She's really tremendously fond of me."

"It sounds impossible."

"I know it, but it's true. If she loved me, and didn't know it, I could understand. I've heard of such cases. But when she loves me, and *knows* that she does—well, how do you explain it?"

"I can only explain it," said Barbara, "by saying that you must have made a very silly mistake."

But still he was obdurate on the point.

"There's no mistake. I'm absolutely right."

"What a sublime egotist you are, Mr. Lane!" Barbara kept her voice as haughty as possible.

"Oh, no. I'm not an egotist; at least, not in this matter. You don't think I'd get all set up over the fact that a girl loved me, do you?"

Her cheeks were flaming now.

"Yes; I think you would," she answered; "but you're so conceited and so stupid that you don't know when you've made a blunder."

"If I'd only made a blunder, everything would be explained," he sighed; "but in this matter I'm infallibly correct."

"You're not!" she cried.

"Oh, I say!"

There was an expression of pained surprise in his face. Barbara blinked her eyes rapidly and trembled a little.

"She hates you! Can you understand that? Hates you—despises you!"

"Now, how in the world do you know that?" he asked.

For an instant she feared that she was going to collapse. All the time he had been deliberately leading her into this—just to humiliate her. Too late she found herself in an absurd trap. He had played on her temper. He had made her—she groaned inwardly when she realized that it was not at all according to the book—he had made her do exactly what he wanted!

All that Barbara wanted now was an exit, and she did not know how to find it. It made her miserable and furious to see him standing there, mocking her with a faint smile and making a great pretense of perplexity. If she could only evaporate, or sink without a trace, or something like that; but such things do not happen when they are desired most. The situation made her giddy; she felt as if she were floating in air, and dangerously inclined to come down out of control.

"To get back to Henrietta," she began, groping for the exit. "If you would give us time—"

He shook his head.

"Henrietta does not seem inclined to wait," he said. "I think she contemplates an early marriage."

Again Barbara's head began to swim. Why, she had only been joking about Henrietta! And now—was it true? If it were true, then Barbara had made herself utterly ridiculous.

"She would hardly leave us in the lurch without a maid," she said, but with no great confidence in her effort to appear indifferent.

"No; I wouldn't want her to do that, either," agreed Jerry. "I'll speak to her about it."

"That, I am sure, will be very considerate of you;" and Barbara bowed frigidly.

"I think she'll be willing to wait a short time—although you can't be certain. Henrietta is a girl of impulses. When she decides to act, she acts."

"It seems so. Well, I congratulate you, Mr. Lane."

He looked doubtful, then said:

"You're a couple of days ahead of time, I think."

"Really?" She was surprised again. "I thought it was settled."

"In about two days. Possibly less, but I'm allowing two days."

At this point Barbara suddenly remembered something.

"But you won't be here in two days," she reminded him. "I gave you a twenty-four-hour notice."

"That's so. Well, I'll try to make it one day, then."

"If you please. Meanwhile I dare say you'll have no objection to my announcing it to the family?"

He considered that.

"Before you do that, Barbara, I'd suggest that you speak to Mr. Lambert about the matter."

"Speak to Ray? Why, what in the world for?"

"I can't explain, but I think you ought to speak to him."

She hated him doubly when he assumed that air of mystery and secretiveness.

"Does he happen to be your adviser in the matter?" she asked.

"I can't explain," he repeated. "I'm very sorry."

"Very well! I'll consult him," said Barbara, and, with an ironical bow, she began walking away.

"I'd be glad if you'd let me know what he says," called Jerry. "You may find him somewhere between the landing and the point. He's become quite a fisherman lately."

Barbara walked on, slowly directing her steps toward the landing. Jerry's last remark reminded her that Ray had been do-

ing a good deal of fishing during the past few days; but that thought merely passed through her mind and vanished again. What puzzled her was that Ray Lambert should in some way be connected with this vulgar affair between Mr. Lane and the housemaid.

Barbara was not a snob, but in this instance she felt that the whole affair was decidedly vulgar. Not that it mattered, so far as she was concerned—not in the least; but—well, why didn't somebody strangle Henrietta?

As she reached the landing and allowed her glance to rove along the shore, she was startled almost into an exclamation. Her unspoken question was being promptly answered. Somebody *was* trying to strangle Henrietta!

There stood Henrietta, not a hundred feet distant, struggling with a man. She was struggling almost as hard as she could. The man had an arm around her neck, and Henrietta was ducking her head and trying to back out of his grip.

Barbara stood rigid, with consternation in every line of her. The struggle proceeded in silence. Very soon it became evident that Henrietta was no match whatever for her antagonist. Her efforts at freedom became weaker and more spasmodic. The man had a hand under her chin, and was forcing her head backward. He was a masterful brute!

Then came a faint scream. Barbara heard it clearly.

"Now, you stop!" said Henrietta.

And then Ray Lambert kissed her very neatly, right on the lips.

(To be concluded in the March number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE)

IDENTITY

I PLUNGED in the pools of your eyes;
Helpless I swooned in their deeps;
Helpless I tried to arise,
As one who sleeps.

As one who sleeps and awakes
I struggled, I fought to be free;
But there in the deeps of your eyes
You prisoned me.

And now I am flesh of your flesh,
Breath of your breath, of your soul;
Our beings are one, and, in you,
Only in you, am I whole!

Edgar Daniel Kramer

The Debt

BY HOWARD ERICKSON

Illustrated by Anton Otto Fischer

THE man stretched fretfully in his seat by the window, after an uneasy night spent in the chair-car. He raised the blind, to find that it was already light, and that the sun was well above the horizon into the bare blue sky.

Sanborn watched the shifting green of the landscape—a green oddly streaked with tawny yellow. The wide wheat-lands bent and rose and stooped again in the lusty winds of morning. Here and there, in smaller measure, half lost amid the grass and grain, rows of anemic corn brushed past the fleeting pane.

The breeze blew with acrid breath across the level fields. Though it was but May and little more than sunrise, there was a strange sensation of warmth in the air, and fiery clouds of dust mingled with the sooty rolls of smoke from the engine funnel.

Every few miles could be seen windmills and red or unpainted buildings bunched in a treeless waste. Ahead rose the tops of grain-elevators. The man in the seat of grimy plush had been observing these towers all the afternoon before, in his journey across the cereal belt.

The wheels, clicking upon the rails with a peculiar metallic beat that added to the impression of speed, jolted Sanborn into complete wakefulness. He brushed his clothes with a pocket-handkerchief and ran his pocket comb through his hair. He felt shaggy as he watched the sleek, freshly shaved, well-dressed men pass down the aisle on their way to breakfast in the diner, after a pleasant sleep of hundreds of miles in comfortable berths.

Let them look and feel that way! He wouldn't pay five dollars for a Pullman, or two dollars for a meal on a train. He could make up his lost sleep and satisfy his overdue hunger when he got out to Sherbondy's.

Sanborn's clothes, though far from being

new or costly, gave evidence of careful mending, cleaning, and pressing at domestic hands. He was still young, with hair thick and dark. His dull complexion spoke of life within the walls of cities. His face, even in relaxation, was hard and almost cruel, and in his faded, grayish eyes there shone a pale, cold gleam. Looking at him, one would have said that here was a man embittered and calloused in the harsh discipline of circumstance.

He was going back to the country from which he had departed in youth, a decade before. He noted the vaguely familiar contour of the prairie over which he had journeyed then. Somewhere ahead of him in the flat expanse was the home he had left. He was not returning to it, though he was going within a few miles of it. It had long since passed into the hands of strangers.

Some of his kin were dead and others gone, scattered wide upon the Dakota plain; but that caused no grief to Sanborn. He cared as little to meet again the men of his blood as he did to visit the graves of his parents in the cemetery near the old homestead. He would not have taken one step out of his way for sentiment. He had other and more solid reasons for coming again to the land of long ago.

As he let his glances wander across the half-remembered countryside, he recalled with what different feelings he had traveled in the direction of the great cities. Then he was a boy, weary of the rigors and gloom of rural existence, going to the stamping-place of men, to make his triumphant way. What dreams he had indulged in as the train swept him out of his native valley! He had visioned returning some time in the pomp and trappings of success.

Sanborn smiled at the ardor of the boy in his teens. In that other day he had



"WHY DID YOU MARRY HIM?"
SNEERED SANBORN AT THE
SOFTLY SNORING FIGURE
AROUND THE CORNER
OF THE TABLE.

thought he would have the world on fire by the time he was thirty. And what had he accomplished?

Through drudgery and scrimping and boot-licking of his superiors, through grinding tyranny where there were wretches so unfortunate as to be at his mercy, he had risen nowhere and amassed nothing, as achievements and acquisitions were reckoned in his world.

He was in charge of the collections department of a business which dealt with people who had little money, and who spent as little as they could of that upon their lawful debts.

He had begun as a collector. Though he had not shown abnormal intelligence or industry, or even any special perseverance, his complete disregard of human feeling

and immunity to pity had earned him the captaincy of the collecting crew. Nothing had ever been known to deter him from exacting payment if it were possible. It was even said of him that he had once attached a corpse. His blood had never throbbed at the sight of misery or at a tale of distress.

In spite of all his ruthlessness, he was not a success. A woman had called him a failure, and he was convinced that she was right. He had come at last to realize that there was some fatal defect of character in him; that he was blasted with the dread curse of inefficiency. It was a handicap which he could not overcome, for all his energy, industry, and unscrupulousness.

The judgment passed upon him by his wife had deeply wounded him. For, almost without the softer qualities of his species as he was, he loved her and feared her displeasure more than anything else in the world.

He had married Laura Alverson after an engagement of years. She knew his mer-

cenary characteristics, and admired and even loved him for them. Her parents had not been money-minded, and she had had to support them in their helpless age. They were dead, and, being free of them at last, she had no desire, as she expressed it, to "take on" any more people of their kind.

It was not Sanborn's parsimonious character that impelled the girl to hold off so long against his importunities to marry him. It was because he was not doing well enough. She wanted him to support her in greater comfort than she had ever known; and she did not think he could do it. This had been the substance of her negative answer through nearly half a dozen years.

But a few months before, after a long period of heart-breaking waiting, a legacy had come to Sanborn. It was on the strength of this that she surrendered.

The bequest was of negligible amount, it developed after the wedding.

Long ago, when he first began paying court to Laura, he had told her of his aunt, then near eighty, in poor health and supposed to be rich. He and a distant cousin, Emma Sherbondy, were her only near relatives; and Sanborn had assumed that he would receive half of her estate.

This contemplated fortune played a big part in the plans of Sanborn and his intended bride. It was going to start them in housekeeping, to buy them a house, and perhaps an automobile.

Laura did not burn her bridges till she was sure that Sanborn was going to get the money. Though engaged to him, she still kept other admirers available. When the aunt at last died, and it was a matter of record that her fiancé was heir to half of the estate, she married him.

Then the terrible blow descended. It became known that the property consisted of no more than a miserable two thousand dollars. The whole of this small amount, the will revealed, was in the hands of John Sherbondy, Emma's husband. He had borrowed it several years before. John had never expected to pay it back, even grumblingly declaring to his wife that it was a shame to give "the old lady" five per cent interest. It was a bitter disappointment to him to learn that half of "his money" had been left to Sanborn.

While his aunt had never exacted a note from Sherbondy, Sanborn felt confident that John would not refuse to pay him his

share—which, he told his wife, was better than nothing. Sherbondy had always been "easy," and was completely under the thumb of his wife. Emma was a conscientious woman, and very loyal to the family of which she had become a member. She had been adopted by Sanborn's uncle. Sanborn and she had been youthful sweethearts, and had maintained a desultory correspondence through the years. Sanborn was sure Emma would make her husband turn over the money, even if the latter should not want to do so.

This was the errand that had brought Sanborn to the country of his youth. He was coming to get his money—and he meant to get it! He was not making this journey, spending his good money for railroad-fare, to go back without his legacy.

The Sherbondys were prosperous farmers. They owned their land—good, fruitful land. Prices for products of the soil were never so high as now. Sherbondy had been exempted from the draft because of his family and agricultural status. Sanborn had spent six months in an army camp, with his earning processes at a standstill, and the woman he was engaged to marry supporting herself.

The man's resolution to obtain the money was strengthened by the memories of his wife's taunts regarding the boasts he had made of his "fortune" when he was wooing her. She had always been vicious in her remarks concerning Emma, because of Sanborn's admission that he and his "cousin" had been lovers in the past.

Sanborn would see the last article of the Sherbondys' property sold under the hammer before he would come back to Laura with empty hands. The thousand dollars, contemptible sum as it seemed and was, had become very vital. Laura had selected a house, and to buy it a thousand dollars in cash was required.

II

MRS. SANBORN had advanced her husband thirty dollars of her own money to make the trip, as he would not get his paycheck till the end of the month. For once she had miscalculated, and had given him fifteen dollars more than he needed to buy his ticket. When he telephoned from the station, she cautioned him against losing it, or spending it, which would have been far worse.

However, he was within a few hours'

ride of his destination without having disposed of one nickel of his fifteen dollars, and he believed he could get home just as inexpensively. He knew that that would gain him a smile, if the thousand dollars would not.

It was almost noon when he got off at the little town that was the nearest railroad point to the Sherbondy farm. The most conspicuous part of the village seemed to be the two elevators, one tall and red, owned by the farmers, and the other short, squat, and green, the property of a syndicate with branch plants all over the section.

The sun blazed down on the brick platform in front of the box-like station, while the wind drove in from the yellowing fields with the searing feel of flame. People were standing at the doors of the few business houses, in front of which automobiles were parked. They were studying the sky, and paid only casual attention to the train and the persons getting out of it.

Sanborn had written to the Sherbondys that he was on his way out, and he expected they would meet him. He saw nothing of them, however. He strolled off the platform down the railroad-track past one of the elevators to wait for their coming.

"Got to have rain; that's all," came the voice of a farmer sitting on a heaped-up load of wheat on the weighing-platform of the elevator.

There was a worried look upon the countryman's face, with its coarse stubble of beard, as he stared into the shiny, smileless blue. Then he dropped his gaze to focus it on the hand of a bulky, sag-bellied, flashily dressed man who was adjusting the scales.

"Just thirty-five hundred and twenty pounds," announced the elevator man, returning the scrutiny with the utmost indifference. He was evidently accustomed to be viewed in the light of a robber. "You said it, brother," he went on, referring to the observation about the weather. "We sure do need some rain awful bad!"

The man in the wagon bumped away.

"'Fraid as hell it won't rain, these farmers," commented the dealer to Sanborn. "It's been awful dry for a couple of years, and if it keeps on much longer a lot of 'em will be going up the flue!"

Sanborn's teeth set firmly as he turned and walked toward the town.

"Bet Sherbondy will be trying to pull

some hard luck stuff on me," he told himself. "Well, I'll tell the world it won't do him any good to weep on my neck!"

Tired of waiting longer, Sanborn telephoned his cousin's place from a store. A childish treble answered. He asked if it was the Sherbondy home. Soon an adult feminine "hello" sounded.

"Is this you, Emma?"

"Yes," returned the voice, dull without curiosity—a voice worn, weary, and cracked, it seemed to Sanborn, with shouting across the windy wastes of that sullen land.

"This is Chester."

"Well, how do you do? Glad you have come. We didn't expect you so soon." The response was cordial, but without animation. "Just run right on out. Take the main road five miles west, and then turn north and drive till you find our place."

"Oh, all right!" He hesitated. "I don't suppose you are going to be in town to-day?"

"No, I am sorry we can't come after you. There's no way for any of us to get to town."

Sanborn thought he would start out afoot. He was sure he could find plenty of people who would give him a ride.

He strode on for about a mile, when, as he had expected, along came an automobile. Remembering the old-time hospitality of travelers in the country, he stopped, to let the motorist see that he wanted a lift.

The man in the light touring-car, with a dozen fence-posts and a new pitchfork in the back of the machine, did not pause.

"Hey, if you don't want to get run over, keep out of the way!" he yelled.

Two or three other drivers passed him in the same way. Finally he flagged a fat man in a big new automobile.

"Hop in," said this person, throwing the engine into high without bothering with the lesser speeds.

The heavy machine tore on through the dusty highway lined with sunflowers and reddish grass. The pilot said little, just kept his eyes on the road. Only once he spoke.

"Bad road to learn to drive an automobile—so dog-gone dusty. The first time I ever drove!"

The next corner was where the way branched off to Sanborn's stopping-place.

He hoped the fat man wasn't going to turn. He preferred to walk, for the car kept zig-zagging abruptly from side to side as it shot along at some forty miles an hour.

"I am going that way to Sherbondy's," said Sanborn, indicating the fork to the right.

At the turn the driver checked his course so suddenly that he nearly shot over into the ditch.

"Much obliged," offered the passenger, getting out hurriedly before the other could volunteer to take him on to where he was going.

"Don't mention it," returned the man. "Would you mind doing something for me?"

"Glad to."

"Well, just tell Sherbondy that I'm about tired of asking him for the interest he owes me, and that he'd better come across while the coming across is good. My name's Masters."

And he smashed on. Sanborn watched the automobile plow its path through the sandy stretch of road, past the fields of sickly green withering in the arid wind and blistering sun.

The landscape appeared to grow rustier in hue as the traveler advanced toward his destination. The impression deepened in his mind that he would have to be hard in collecting that money. His thin lips closed tighter.

"Nothing will stop me," he declared to himself, and he knew he was telling the truth.

Reaching the summit of a well-remembered hill, the first thing he had seen that he definitely recognized, the man glimpsed the old farm place of the Sherbondys, the same old racked and ramshackle buildings about which he had played as a boy. The sprawling structures were as innocent of paint as when Emma's foster-father had erected them a generation before.

There was no fence protecting the house from the road, and a horse was cropping grass in front of the sagging porch. Sanborn thought he would surprise his cousin by slipping around the corner of the lean-to. His purpose was frustrated by half a dozen children ranging from two to ten years old, and from comparatively grimy and tattered to extremely dirty and ragged. They gazed at him impudently, with the mingled stolidness and bashfulness of country children.

A woman looked out of the door. It was Emma, and she smiled a welcome; but to Sanborn it was another creature than the Emma of his recollection. She was a mere shell of the girl of former times, bent and thin and gray and wrinkled, with a tired, hopeless, defeated look in her eyes that struck Sanborn with a sense of personal guilt.

He reflected how fair and fresh and buoyant she had been when last he looked upon her. He had adored her, and she had worshiped him with a passion that even his conceited self found difficult to explain. He had gone away, giving her up in his ambition to carve out a career for himself in what he called the "great world." He had forgotten now that he had been partly influenced to leave by learning that her foster uncle had lost possession of his land and home. In despair and bitterness she had allowed Sherbondy to console and marry her.

Conscience awoke in Sanborn at the sight of Emma. As if at the sweep of a magician's wand, the years were rolled back and he visioned her again as when her young body throbbed in his arms on the night he held her to him and declared his love in words of fire.

Ah, what might have been if he had stayed and married her! She would not be the slattern, weak and worn and broken, that she was. And he, too—he would not be the slave of circumstance and of a woman with an unsatisfied heart and a tireless tongue.

The thought of his wife abruptly brought up the question of his mission here. He must not let the memories of a dead romance sway him, even for a moment, from duty and interest.

"Run along," the woman told the children, who clung to her skirts and surveyed the man in the Sunday clothes in undisguised curiosity.

Her articulation, even more than her appearance, impressed Sanborn with the change in her. Just as it had sounded over the telephone, it now rang cracked and shrill.

"What has happened to your voice?" he asked.

"Oh, it's gone with the rest of me."

"How are you making out here?"

"Not very well. Had it awful dry for years, and the prospects are worse than ever this season. Say, you children," she

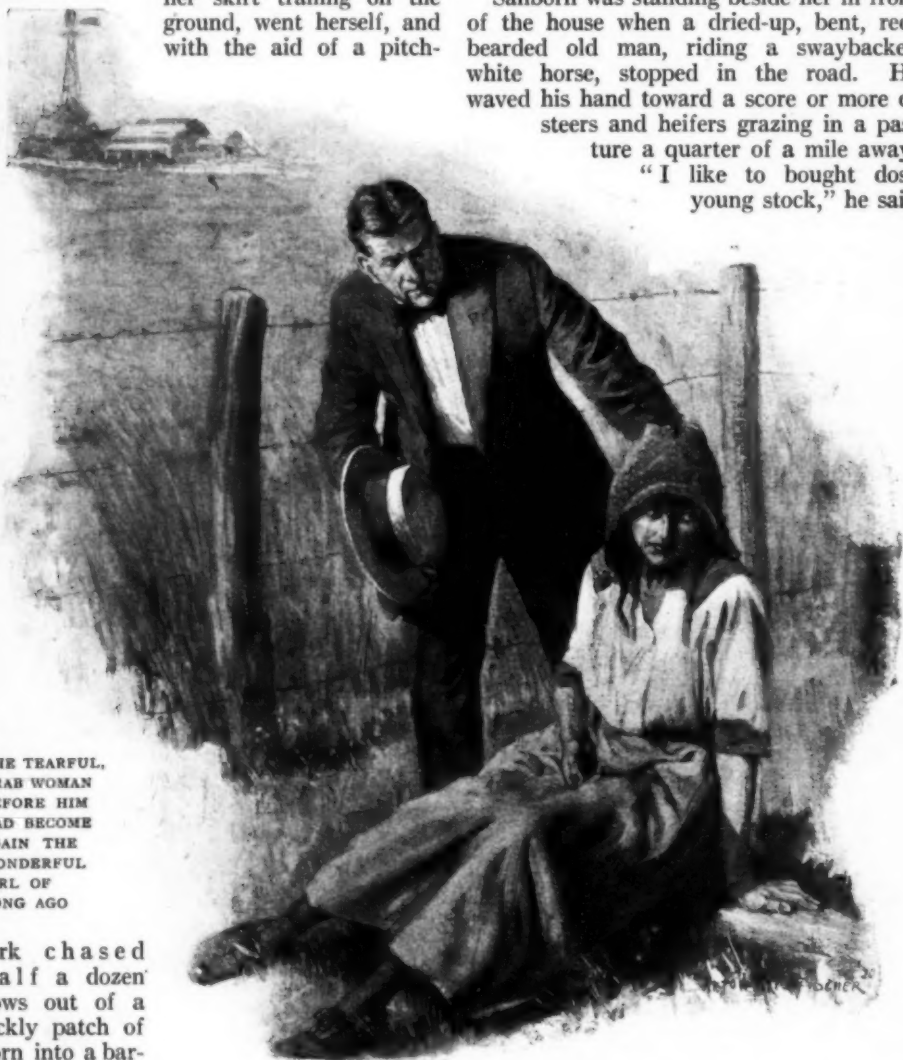
commanded, "run and drive those cattle out of the corn!"

The youngsters were too busy playing and fighting to heed her; and the woman, her skirt trailing on the ground, went herself, and with the aid of a pitch-

vals in driving them from the coveted vegetation. He did not regret this interruption very much, for Emma had little that was cheerful to tell him.

Sanborn was standing beside her in front of the house when a dried-up, bent, red-bearded old man, riding a swaybacked white horse, stopped in the road. He waved his hand toward a score or more of steers and heifers grazing in a pasture a quarter of a mile away.

"I like to bought dose young stock," he said



THE TEARFUL, DRAB WOMAN BEFORE HIM HAD BECOME AGAIN THE WONDERFUL GIRL OF LONG AGO

fork chased half a dozen cows out of a sickly patch of corn into a barren pasture.

Five minutes later, as she was describing how Sherbondy lost his best horse because he let it get at his seed corn one night, the hungry cattle were once more crowding through the loose wires into the maize-field.

As the children were still indifferent to her call, the visitor volunteered to eject the voracious animals; and for several hours he was occupied at frequent inter-

vals in a squeaky voice. "Mrs. Sherbondy, vill you took a toosand dollars for dem young cattles?"

The woman shook her head decisively. The old man kicked his horse's sides with his heels and rode on.

III

SHERBONDY straggled in late in the afternoon, the tugs of his horses' harness

dragging on the ground. The sides of the animals were caked with great lumps of dried mud.

Sherbondy was a man of forty. He bore with him an unpleasant odor of sweat; his hair needed cutting, and his teeth were a dirty yellow. His face was scorched to the color of brick. The ends of his thick, colorless mustache were stained a darker hue by tobacco-juice.

His eyes were mild and watery. When the rest of his face grinned a perfunctory welcome to Sanborn, they remained expressionless. They seemed to belong to another person.

"Chet has been on the run all afternoon, keeping those cows out of the corn," complained the woman, in a querulous, accusing voice.

Sherbondy grinned still more, all but his eyes.

"Emma is always worrying about some little thing like a cow getting a bite of corn. She's afraid the stock will waste the crop. To see her stew around, you would think we didn't have a dollar!"

"I wish we had," returned his wife without humor.

"Well, I'll get supper," she went on. "John, you can take Chet and show him around. Bring in some coal, Harry," she said to the oldest boy.

The youth did not respond till the father spoke, raising his voice. Then he sullenly proceeded to fill a milk-pail with coal from a pile on the ground. Sanborn noted that about half the fuel had been trampled and scattered by stock.

"I should think you would burn corn-cobs instead of buying that expensive coal," he said to the farmer.

"Well, I had a big pile of cobs after I got through shelling, but it snowed and rained on them, and then cattle and pigs ran over them till they warn't fit to burn; so I had to get me some coal."

The visitor stood at the barn door while Sherbondy carried hay to the horses. The fodder was taken from a wide stack that sagged in the middle. Part of it was spoiled.

"Just enough rain to rot the hay," grumbled the farmer.

Sanborn recalled enough of the farm science of his youth to remark mentally that if the hay had been stacked properly it would have been preserved entirely.

Looking inside the barn, he saw that the

heads of the horses were much lower than their hindquarters. The stable apparently had not been cleaned out that season, and the refuse had piled up under the hind feet of the horses till the poor creatures literally stood on their heads.

"The man's a lazy, shiftless hound," thought Sanborn.

He raged as he caught a glimpse of an automobile in the alley between the corn-crib and the granary—the only article of machinery on the place that had a touch of shelter.

"Spreading himself riding in an automobile, with me working like a slave and him owing me money! Well, he'll cough up, or my name's not Sanborn!"

Aggressively Sanborn spoke of the good times, the big crops and high prices that had come to the farmers—conditions that would have seemed impossible in his day on the land.

The other countered with stories of the drought; with instances of the high cost of farming; of the growing expensiveness of machinery, labor, everything that the agrarian producer had to buy or hire. He talked of the grinding extortions of the middlemen, of the speculators and profiteers and parasitic people of the great cities. "Parasites" was a word often in his mouth, and he emphasized the epithet maliciously in a way that made Sanborn feel that he was especially included among them.

Sherbondy had always been of unstable tendencies in politics. Just now he was all wrought up over an organization of farmers and quasi-farmers that was seeking control of the State. His dull face glowed and his cadaverous eyes gleamed as he talked on.

Sanborn had not believed the man could become so enthusiastic. He preferred to see him sluggish and wooden, rather than stirred by this half-hysterical fervor. He was glad when one of the children came running with the announcement that supper was ready, and interrupted Sherbondy's talk.

Around the big, long table they sat—Sanborn, the farmer, and the hired man, a stolid, round-faced Swede, at one end, while the children lined the sides. The woman perched herself on a stool at the other end of the board, when she was not running back and forth with a coffee-pot or a grid-dle of pancakes.

The visitor thought the griddle-cakes a



"WE AREN'T GOING TO SELL THE CATTLE," ANNOUNCED EMMA, WITHOUT EXPLANATION

singular article of food at this time of day, they being always associated in his mind with breakfast and winter mornings.

"Pancakes yet!" the hired man growled heavily. "Don't we never had noddin' else but pancakes by here?"

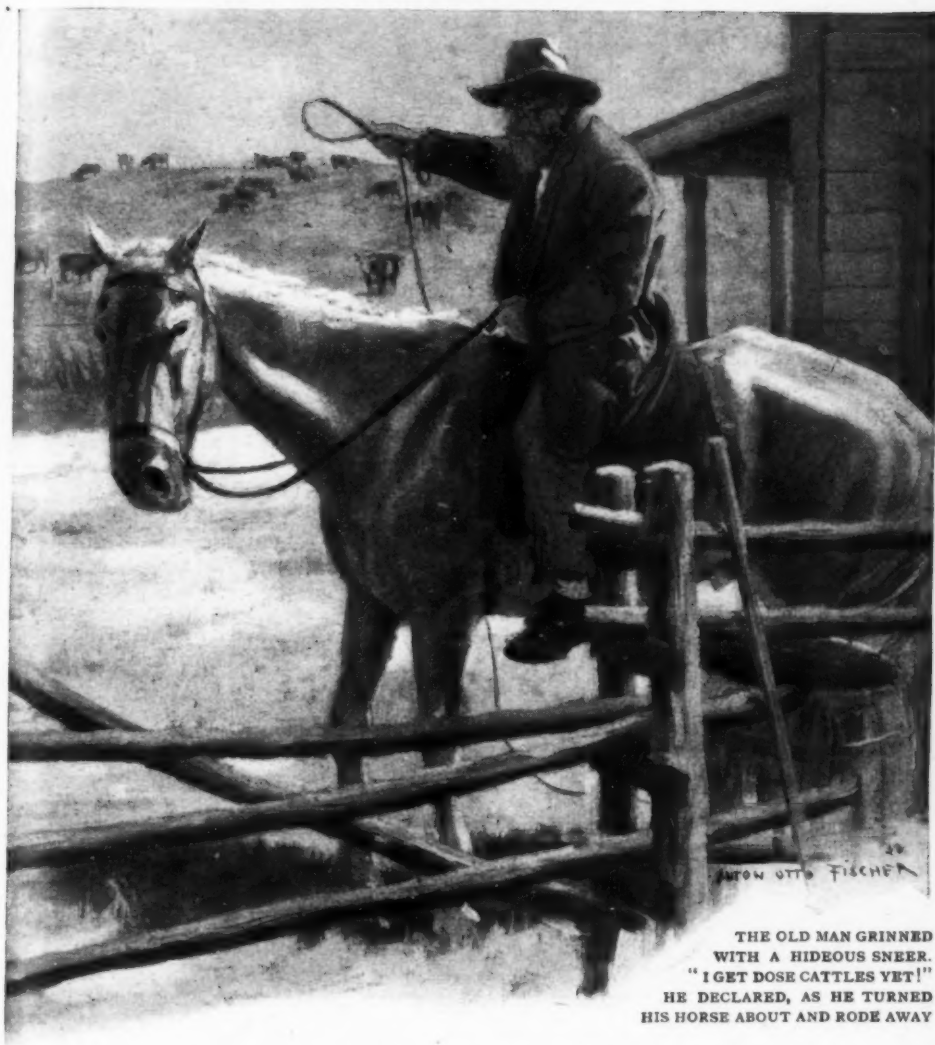
The muttered words reached the woman, and a flush empurpled her face. Sanborn wriggled in embarrassment. Sherbondy heard, but did not seem to take to heart the slur at his wife's selection of food.

The children, yelling and beating on their plates with clattering knives, were contented with the menu. One lifted up his voice so persistently for more cakes that the mother smacked him sharply on the cheek with the dripping batter ladle. When this failed to curb his ardor for the

edibles his fancy craved, she seized him by his greasy collar, drew him over her lap, and spanked him with the same handy utensil.

After a time the children obtained their fill and left to play. The hired man grunted and lumbered out to the doorway, where he sat and watched the huge Russian thistles roll over the prairie in the wind.

Sanborn surveyed the woman who faced him. He thought of her looking across the table every day of her life at that drab husband; at the turbulent, untidy chil-



THE OLD MAN GRINNED
WITH A HIDEOUS SNEER.
"I GET DOSE CATTLES YET!"
HE DECLARED, AS HE TURNED
HIS HORSE ABOUT AND RODE AWAY

dren; at the stupid, surly hired man. As before, pity for her mingled with pity for himself. He felt a vague regret that he had gone from her and doomed her to drudgery and disappointment.

The two talked of people and things of their youth while the room grew dim with the coming night. The husband sat with his arm resting on the soiled red tablecloth, occasionally saying a word, as became a host, or more often dozing.

Emma mentioned a dance, and Sanborn drew the discussion to their ride behind his jingling horses in the big bob-sled over a road of shining white beneath a romantic

moon. He had been sentimental, had kissed her, and she had not resisted. He had even told her that he loved her, and hinted vaguely of marriage. It was an episode he had long forgotten, a thing he had not remembered till now, as he looked at her face, indistinct in the semidarkness.

When she responded, her voice was as matter-of-fact as when she commented on the imminent failure of the hay-crop.

"I kissed you then," he added, half-jokingly, but with a strain of reminiscent seriousness.

"Yes," Emma returned in the same impersonal tone she had used before. "I wouldn't be surprised. I let several young

men kiss me in the moonlight—one with fatal results, when I promised to marry him and kept my promise!"

It was the first time she had spoken of her marriage in that bitter manner, or indeed in any other manner. It precipitated her anew into a recountal of the mistakes, hardships, misfortunes, and disasters past and in prospect. They were in debt, without money or hope of relief, and trouble was constantly massing upon the horizon.

"Why did you marry him?" sneered Sanborn at the softly snoring figure around the corner of the table.

For a moment Emma's face warmed with blood, and her voice bristled.

"He isn't much, but he pitched in and bought back the farm that Uncle George lost. He's tried awful hard to keep possession of it, too."

Sanborn flushed. He recalled that after he proposed marriage to Emma he had ignored her suggestion that he should buy the old place, with its house, in which most of her life had been spent. The task had looked too big to him; but Sherbondy had bought it. John always had been a fool! The thought of this asinine action stirred his determination to make the man pay over the money that he owed Sanborn.

Sherbondy's pipe fell to the floor. The farmer awoke with a start.

"Now for business," said Sanborn to himself.

As Mrs. Sherbondy lighted the hanging lamp on the wall, he began to speak casually of his affairs, of his struggles, of the setback his stay in the army had caused him, of the ever-mounting cost of living in the city, and of his hope, deferred till now, of buying a house.

He needed one thousand dollars to make first payment on a house, he told them. Both gazed dumbly and dismally at the floor. They sensed what was coming.

"Sherbondy," he declared abruptly, "I came to get that one thousand dollars you owe me from Aunt Ada's estate."

Sherbondy raised his eyes to the other's face.

"All right! I'll get it for you just as soon as I can."

"I've got to have it now—to-morrow, before I go out on the noon train," asserted Sanborn in the tone he used in making collections.

"I don't know where on earth I'll get it," Sherbondy mumbled sullenly.

"You can sell that automobile out there," suggested his creditor.

"Not by damsite, he sell my Ford!" exclaimed the hired man, who was passing through on his way up-stairs to bed at the moment.

"You have a nice lot of young cattle," continued Sanborn. "I heard that farmer with the red whiskers offer one thousand dollars for your bunch of young stock."

Emma spoke for the first time since Sanborn made his brusque demand.

"Yes, John, we owe Chet the money—Aunt Ada's money—and we must pay it any way we can. You had better call up Swenson the first thing in the morning, and tell him to come for the stock."

"All right!" muttered Sherbondy.

He was too much under the domination of his wife to cross her wishes and speak the ugly things that had crawled from his heart into his bile-tainted face.

An awkward pause followed, and Sanborn was glad when Emma asked him if he was ready to "turn in." He followed the boy up-stairs to a room that smelled mustily of decaying potatoes and impudent mice. In a corner he heard the hired man snoring.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, the guest listened to Sherbondy kicking off a heavy plow-shoe. The man's words reached him in snatches through the stovepipe hole in the floor.

"It will sure ruin us," was all of the talk he could assemble.

Sanborn fell asleep and dreamed; but he did not dream of the thousand dollars, as he had done the night before in the chair-car. He thought he was taking Emma to the circus on the Fourth of July. He had done that the first time they ever "went together."

IV

HE was awakened by a woman's voice telephoning. It was Mrs. Sherbondy telling Swenson to come over and take the cattle. She hung up the receiver and called to her husband to get up and bring the stock from the pasture. He grunted a response.

The door of the house banged, and Sanborn saw the woman walking toward the barn. He rose, hurriedly dressed, and strolled outside. It was little more than daylight, but already, as on the morning before, the air was charged with heat.

The pigs were industriously rooting in the house-yard, while in the barn the horses munched the hay that Emma had evidently pitched into their mangers. On the other side of a shriveled field of grain he saw the sunbonneted figure of Mrs. Sherbondy rounding up the herd of red cattle.

He skirted the edge of the wheat, the dew on the short grass along the fence scarcely dampening the dust on his shoes. He crossed into the pasture and approached Emma. Apparently tired out with trying to drive the stubborn brutes homeward, she was resting, seated on a fence-post that had rotted off and lay on the ground.

He was almost beside her before she looked up. He was startled to note that she had been crying.

"Why, Emma, what is the matter?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing. I just happened to feel blue, that's all."

"Well, what makes you blue?" insisted Sanborn. "Is it because you are selling the cattle?"

The woman hesitated as she rose to her feet. Try as he might to banish it, the vision of her as he had known her of old, so different from what she was here in actuality, rose before Sanborn.

"It's going to be pretty hard on us," she finally answered.

"But with your crops so short you would have to sell most of your surplus stock, anyway," he argued. "You can't feed them through this drought, can you?"

Mrs. Sherbondy sighed.

"It's stock that saves people in these dry times. Back in the nineties those who just raised grain failed flatly, lost their land and money, everything they had, while men like Swenson stuck through it just because they had cattle. He bought up stock then like he is doing now, and the people he bought it from did what we will do—went to the wall. He bought Uncle George's cattle."

The truth of her statement impressed Sanborn. His parents had weathered the great drought as the long-headed Swenson did, while Uncle George had lost his farm—this very farm that Emma saw slipping away from her the second time.

"I've been pounding at John for years to get cattle, cattle," the woman continued; "and we have been slowly accumulating a few. They're scrubs and skimpy from lack of care and feed, but they're cattle. They

would weather us through the dry time that everybody says is here for a good long while to come. Even as it is, we are getting behind with the interest on the farm mortgage. We can't hold on long with the cattle gone. We'll have to give up our place and rent John's mother's farm, and live with her."

She concluded with a sigh. Sanborn sighed in sympathy. He had a lively recollection of old Mrs. Sherbondy, as "tight" as her son was shiftless, perhaps the meanest woman he had ever known.

The red sun rising over the tarnished wheat-field seemed unreal, its rays falling upon the carroty cattle with an almost spectral glimmer. He saw the prairie sheeted with snow, gleaming white as silver in the refulgent moon. The tearful, drab woman before him had become again the wonderful girl of long ago. The past rushed over him with such overwhelming force as to blot out the sordid present with its grim futility and tragedy.

The perverse cattle broke and scattered, eating their way in the opposite direction from the barns, viciously switching at the insistent flies.

"Let them go! I don't want them," Sanborn said to the woman. "I don't want the money, if paying it will ruin you."

Emma gazed at him dumbly, in apathetic gratitude.

"Of course," she answered, "if you don't want to have us sell the stock, we'll be awful glad."

With heavy steps and heavy heart, Sanborn followed Sherbondy's wife to the buildings. The red-whiskered Swede was riding his swaybacked horse into the yard, his rawhide cattle whip dragging on the ground.

"We aren't going to sell the cattle," announced Emma, without explanation.

Swenson grinned with a hideous sneer.

"I get dose cattles yet!" he declared, as he turned his horse about and rode away.

Inside the house, the little girl was cooking oatmeal. The hired man was seated on the stoop, pulling on his shoes. Sherbondy came out of the barn, a pitchfork in his hand.

"You aren't going to sell the cattle?" he said, staring at his wife and then at Sanborn.

"No," she returned, with a feeble smile at Sanborn. "Chester isn't going to make

us do that. He won't push us for the money."

Sherbondy, like his wife, seemed to take it as a matter of course.

"Breakfast is ready!" sang out the child in the door.

They all went in. Little was said except by the hired man, who grumbled about the oatmeal, which was burned, and had been cooked without salt.

Sanborn was still overrun with sentimental pity for Emma. He had not emerged from the romantic haze that had enveloped him anew at sight of her.

John and the hired man, having finished eating, shuffled outside. Sanborn rose reluctantly to follow. He wanted to speak again to Emma about the loan, to make her see why he was not collecting it, as he had said he had come to do; but between them was the wall that fate had erected, the barrier reared by her years of lonely, mournful drudgery.

He paused at the door and picked up his grip where he had set it down on coming into the house the day before.

"I guess I ought to be going back, if some of you can drive me to town," he said.

"Sure, John will take you to the train, if you have to go to-day. Carl will let him drive you in his car. Of course, we would like to have you come back and bring your wife."

At that moment an automobile shot into the yard, the hub of the rear wheel hitting a corner of the house and splintering a board. Sanborn recognized the driver as Masters, the man who had given him a lift on the way out from town.

"Hey, Sherbondy!" hailed the visitor.

John came slowly to the side of the car.

"Sherbondy," declared Masters with emphatic brevity, "if you don't pay me the interest on that note you owe me, by hell, I'll turn the matter over to Judge Alexander to-day!"

"Oh, Chester, you haven't got fifteen dollars you can lend John for a couple of weeks, have you?" asked Emma anxiously.

Sanborn stood hesitating. A vision of his wife with her hand outstretched in familiar gesture gave way to a picture of a young girl with red lips uplifted in the moonlight.

"I'll send you the money as soon as I can haul some wheat to town," volunteered Sherbondy.

Sanborn put his hand in his trouser-pocket and left it there, his mind a whirl of confused emotions.

"What is your address, so I can send you the money?" pursued Sherbondy.

"It is number sixteen Cloverdale Terrace," returned Sanborn.

He drew out his purse, opened it, and fingered the money that his wife had given him, while the two men watched him, the one in the automobile with a derisive smile. Emma was not looking at him.

Drawing forth a ten-dollar bill and a five, Sanborn put the currency in the waiting hand of Sherbondy, which closed greedily on it, and then reluctantly transferred the contents to the palm of Masters.

"Oh, Chester, thank you so much!" came from Emma.

Noting the suit-case beside Sanborn, the motorist said:

"If you are going to town, hop in. That's where I'm headed for."

Chester put his grip in the car and started to walk toward Emma.

"Hurry up and get in, if you're going with me," said Masters's impatient voice.

Sanborn hastily shook the limp hands of the Sherbondys and clambered into the car, which a minute later was shooting out into the sandy thoroughfare, narrowly missing a fence-post.

The departing guest waved an adieu. Sherbondy responded with a feeble gesture.

Emma did not see Sanborn start. She was busy dragging a youngster out of a rain-barrel which, with a strange and pathetic faith, had been placed under the arid eaves of the sun-drenched, wind-parched house.

Half a mile farther on, Masters shouted a greeting to two men who were talking across a line fence while their horses stamped and kicked at the flies. The farmers glanced at the passing car, yelled back a hail, and returned their gaze to the yellow fields and rainless sky.

Chet Sanborn did not note the implacable blue of the firmament or of the poor, hopeless devils staring up at it. Neither was his mind on tender scenes of love-making in the snowy moonlight of a phantom past. He was thinking what he would say to Laura when she would ask him for the thousand dollars he had gone to collect from the Sherbondys, and how he would account for the fifteen dollars of her money that he had let them borrow.

The Roof Tree*

AN EPIC OF THE FEUD COUNTRY

By Charles Neville Buck

Author of "The Battle Cry," "When Bear Cat Went Dry," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LEE CONREY

XXVIII

ACROSS in Virginia, Sally Turk, wife of the dead man and sister of the man accused of murdering him, had rocked her anemic baby to sleep after a long period of twilight fretfulness, and now she stood looking down into its crib with a distraught and anxious countenance. She was leaving it to the care of another, and did not know when she would come back.

"I'm right glad leetle Ken's done tuck ter the bottle," she said with forced cheerfulness to the hag-like Mirandy Sloane. "Mebby, when I gits back, thar'll be a mite more flesh on them puny leetle bones of hisn."

Her words caught sob-like in her throat as she wheeled resolutely and caught up her shawl and bonnet.

Out at the tumble-down stable she saddled and mounted a mule. The animal limped through a blackness like a sea of freezing ink, and the rider shivered as she sat in the old carpet-cushioned side-saddle and flapped a long switch monotonously upon the flanks of her "ridin' critter."

The journey she was undertaking lay toward the town where her brother was "hampered" in jail; but she turned at a crossroad two miles short of that objective, and kept to the right until she came to a two-storied house surrounded by an orchard—a place of substantial and commodious size. Its windows were closed, and it loomed only as a squarish block of denser shadow against the formless background of night. All shapes were neutralized under a cloudy and gusty sky.

Dogs rushed out, barking noisily, as the woman slipped from her saddle; but at the sound of her voice they stilled their clamor—for dogs are not informed when old friendship turns to enmity.

The front door opened to her somewhat timid knock; but it opened only to a slit, and the face that peered out was that of a woman, who, when she recognized the voice outside, seemed half-minded to slam it again in refusal of welcome. Curiosity, however, won a minor victory over hostility, and the mistress of the house slipped out, holding the door inhospitably closed at her back.

"Fer the land's sake, Sally Turk, what brings ye hyar?" she challenged, with the rasp of hard unreceptiveness.

"I come ter see Will," the visitor replied in a note of pleading. "I've jest got to see Will!"

The other woman held the door as she retorted harshly:

"All thet you an' Will hev got ter do kin be done in cote ter-morrer, I reckon."

But Sally Turk clutched the arm of Will Turk's wife with fingers that were tight with the obduracy of despair.

"I've got ter see Will," she pleaded. "Fer God's sake, don't deny me! Hit's the only thing I asks of ye now, an' hit's a matter of master int'rest ter Will es well es me. I'll go down on my knees, ef hit 'll pleasure him, but I've got ter see him!"

There was something in the colorless monotony of that reiteration which Lindy Turk, whose teeth were chattering in the icy wind, could not deny. With a graceless concession she opened the door.

* Copyright, 1920, by Charles Neville Buck—This story began in the August (1920) number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

"Come inside, then," she ordered brusquely. "I'll find out will he see ye; but I misdoubts hit."

Inside the room, the woman who had ridden across the hills sank into a low, hickory-withered chair by the smoldering hearth, and hunched there, faint and wordless. Now that she had arrived, the ordeal before her loomed big with threat.

Lindy, instead of calling her husband, stood stolidly with arms akimbo, and with a merciless glitter of animosity in her eyes.

"Hit's a right qu'ar an' insolent thing fer ye ter do," she finally observed, "comin' over hyar thisaway, on the very eve of Ken Thornton's trial!"

"I've got ter see Will," echoed the strained voice by the hearth, as if the words were the only ones she knew. "I've got ter see Will!"

"When John war murdered over thar, afore yore baby was borned," went on Lindy, as if reading from a memorized indictment, "Will stud ready ter succor an' help ye every fashion he could. Then hit come ter light thet 'stid of defendin' the name of yore dead husband, ye aimed ter stand by the man thet slew him. Ye even named yore brat after his cold-blooded murderer!"

The huddled supplicant in the chair straightened painfully out of her attitude of dejection, and her words seemed to come from far away.

"He war my brother," she said simply.

"Yes, an' John Turk warn't nothin' but yore husband!" flashed back the scathing retort. "Ye give hit out ter each an' every thet all yore sympathy war with the man thet kilt him; an' from thet day on Will an' me war done with ye. Now we aims ter see thet brother of yours hanged; an' hit's too tardy ter come a beggin' an' pleadin'!"

Kenneth Thornton's sister rose and stood swaying on her feet, holding herself upright by the back of the chair. Her eyes were piteous in their suffering.

"Fer God's sake, Lindy," she begged, "don't go on denyin' me no more! We used ter love each other. When I war married, ye stud up with me. When yore fust baby war born, I set by yore bedside. Now I'm nigh heart-broke!"

Her voice, hysterically uncontrolled, shrilled almost to a scream. At that moment the door of the other room opened to show Will Turk, shirt-sleeved and somber of visage, standing on the threshold.

"What's all this ter-do in hyar?" he demanded gruffly.

Then, seeing the wife of his dead brother, he stiffened, and his chin thrust itself outward into bulldog obduracy.

"I kain't no fashion get shet of her," explained his wife, as if she felt called upon to explain her ineffectiveness as a sentinel.

Will Turk's voice came in the crispness of clipped syllables.

"Lindy, I don't need ye no more right now. I reckon I kin contrive ter git rid of this woman by myself!"

Then, as the door closed upon Will's wife, his sister-in-law moved slowly forward. She and the man stood gazing at each other, while between them lay six feet of floor and mountains of animosities.

"Ef ye've come hyar ter plead fer Ken," he warned her at last, "ye comes too late. Ef John's bein' yore husband didn't mean nuthin' ter ye, his bein' my brother means a master lot ter me; an' the man thet kilt him's goin' ter die!"

"Will," she began brokenly, "ye was always like a real brother ter me in the old days. Hain't ye got no pity left in yore heart fer me? Don't ye remember nothin' but the day thet John died?"

The drooping mustache seemed to droop lower, and the black brows drew together.

"I hain't fergot nothin'. I wanted ter befriend ye so long es I could. Outside my own fam'ly I didn't love no person better; but thet only made me hate ye wusser when ye turned traitor ter our blood!"

She stepped unsteadily forward and caught at his hand; but the man jerked it away as from an infection.

"But don't ye know thet John misused me, Will? Don't ye know thet he war a killin' me right then?"

"I takes notice ye didn't niver make no complaint till ye tuck thought of Ken's deefense, albeit men knowed thar was bad blood betwixt him an' John. Now I aims ter let Ken pay what he owes in lawful fashion. I aims ter hang him!"

Sally retreated to the hearth and stood leaning there weakly. With fumbling fingers she brought from inside her dress a soiled sheet of folded paper. She drew a long breath of resolution, passing one hand over her face, where the hair fell wispy and straggling. Then she braced herself with all the strength and self-will left to her.

"Ken didn't niver kill John," she said

slowly, forcing a voice that seemed to have hardly breath enough to carry it to audibility. "I kilt him!"

For an instant the room was as still as a tomb with only lifeless tenants. Then Will Turk took one quick step forward, to halt again; and his voice broke into an amazed and incredulous interjection.

"*You kilt him?*" he said.

"Yes, I kilt him. He hed done beat me, an' he war chokin' me. His misuse of me war what him an' Ken fell out erbout. I war too proud ter tell anybody else; but Ken knowed. I war faintin' away with his fingers on my throat—we war right by the table, whar his own pistol lay—I grabbed hit up an' shot. Ken come ter the door jest es hit went off."

For a space, facing this new statement of fact, the brother of the dead man remained in his unmoving posture of amazed silence. Then he responded with a scornfully disbelieving laugh. In a woman one would have called it hysterical; but his words, when he spoke, were steady enough.

"Thet's a right slick story, Sally, but hit don't pull no wool over my eyes. Hit's too tardy fer right-minded folks ter believe hit."

The woman sought to answer, but her moving lips gave no sound. She had thought that the world stood always ready to accept self-confessed guilt. Her throat worked spasmodically until, at last, her dumbness was conquered.

"Does ye think hit's the sort of lie I'd tell willin'ly?" she asked. "Don't hit put me right whar Ken's at now, with the gallows ahead of me?" She broke off; then her words rose to a shrill pitch of excitement. "Fer God's sake, heed me in time! Ye seeks ter hang somebody fer killin' John. Hang me!"

Will Turk paced the room for several meditative turns, with his head low on his breast and his hands gripped at his back. Then he halted and stood facing her.

"What does ye aim ter do with thet thar paper?" he demanded.

"Hit's my confession, all wrote out an' ready ter be swore ter," she told him. "Ef ye won't heed me, I've got ter give hit ter the jedge—in open cote."

But the man who gave orders to judges shook his head.

"Hit won't avail ye," he assured her with a voice to which the flinty quality had returned. "Hit's jest evidence in

Ken's favor, but hit don't jedgmatically sottle nothin'. I reckon, bein' a woman, ye figgers ye kin come cl'ar whilst Ken would be shore ter hang; but I'll see thet nothin' don't come of thet!"

"Does ye mean?"—Sally was already so ghost pale that she could not turn paler—"does ye mean they'll go on an' hang him anyhow?"

Will Turk's head came back and his shoulders straightened.

"Mayhap they will, ef I bids 'em to," he retorted.

"Listen at me, Will," the woman cried, in such an anguish of beseeching that even her present auditor could not escape the need of obeying. "Listen at me, because ye knows in yore heart I hain't lyin'. I'm tellin' the whole truth thet I was afeared ter tell afore. I let him take the blame because I was skeered, an' because the baby was goin' ter be borned. I hain't nuver been no liar, Will, an' I hain't one now!"

The man had half turned his back, as if in final denial of her plea; yet now, after a momentary pause, he turned back again, and she thought that there was something like a glimmer of relenting behind his gruffness as he gave curt permission:

"Go on, then; I'm harkenin'."

Late into that night they talked, but it was the woman who said most, while the man listened in non-committal taciturnity. His memory flashed disturbingly back to boyhood days, and testified for the suppliant with reminders of occasional outcroppings of cruelty in his brother as a child. That outward guise of suavity which men had known in John Turk he knew for a coat under which had been worn another and harsher garment of self-will.

But against these admissions the countryside dictator doggedly stiffened his resistance. His brother had been killed, and the stage was set for reprisal. His moment was at hand, and it was not to be lightly forfeited.

Yet to take vengeance on an innocent scapegoat would be a poor method of healing the deep bruise of outraged loyalty. If Ken Thornton, in order to protect a woman, had assumed a guilt not his own, Will Turk had no quarrel with Ken Thornton. Moreover, he could not forget that until the day of the shooting this man had been his friend. He must make no mistake by erring on the side of passion; nor must



"FER GOD'S SAKE,
LINDY," SHE BEGGED.
"DON'T GO ON DENY-
IN' ME NO MORE! WE
USED TER LOVE EACH
OTHER"

he, with just vengeance in his grasp, let it slip because a woman had beguiled him with lies and tears.

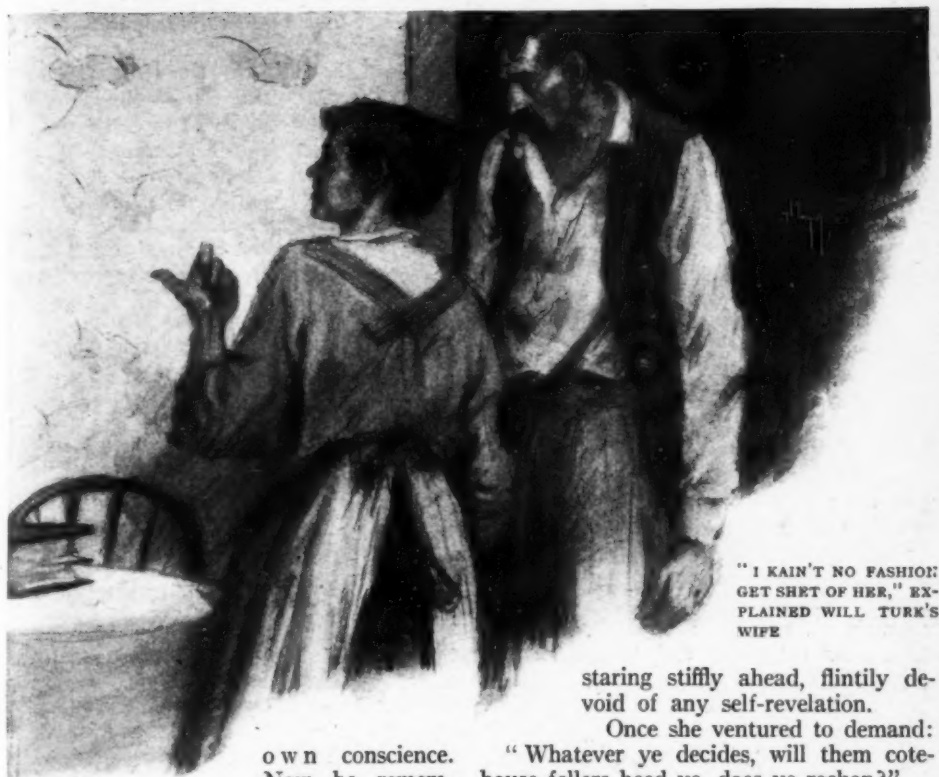
Finally the brother-in-law went over to where Sally was still sitting with her eyes fixed on him in a dumb tensiety of waiting.

"Ye compelled me ter harken ter ye," he said; "but I hain't got no answer ready fer ye yit. Hit all depends on whether ye're tellin' me the truth or jest lyin' ter save Ken's neck, an' thet needs ter be studied. Ye kin sleep hyar ter-night, anyhow. Ter-morrer, when I've talked with the State

lawyer, I'll give ye my answer; but not afore then."

Will Turk did not sleep that night. His thoughts were embattled with the conflict of many emotions, and morning found him hollow-eyed.

Perhaps, in sum total, this man's use of his power had been abuse. Terrorization and the prostitution of law had been its keystone and arch; but he had not yet surrendered his self-respect, because he thought of himself as a strong man charged with responsibility and accountable to his



"I KAIN'T NO FASHION
GET SHRT OF HER," EX-
PLAINED WILL TURK'S
WIFE

own conscience. Now he remembered the Ken Thornton who had once been almost a brother. Old affections had curdled into wormwood bitterness; but if the woman told the truth, her narration altered all that.

Somehow he could feel no resentment at all against her. If *she* had killed John Turk, she had acted only in self-defense and under the spur of desperation. She had been feminine weakness revolting against brutal strength.

As he pondered, his determination wavered and swung to and fro, pendulum fashion. If she were lying—and he would hardly blame her for that, either—he would be her dupe to show mercy, and mercy would be weakness.

Sally Turk rested no more peacefully than he that night; and in the gray of dawn, when she looked into his face across the kitchen table, she could read nothing from the stony emptiness that kept guard over his emotions.

A little later she rode at his saddle-skirt in an agony of suspense. Whenever she cast a furtive glance at him, he was

staring stiffly ahead, flintily devoid of any self-revelation.

Once she ventured to demand:

"Whatever ye decides, will them cote-house fellers heed ye, does ye reckon?"

For a moment Turk glanced sideways with narrowed eyes.

"I don't seek ter persuade them fellers," he made brief and pointed reply. "I orders 'em!"

At the court-house door Will Turk left her with a nod, and went direct into the judge's chamber, the commonwealth's attorney following him. Of what law was being laid down there Sally Turk remained in heart-racking ignorance.

Beyond the court-house doors, plastered with tax-posters and notices of sheriff's sales, the county-seat simmered with an air of excitement that morning. Street loungers, waiting for the trial to begin, knew the faces of those who had been neighbors, friendly or hostile, for many years; but to-day there were strangers in town as well.

These unknown men had arrived soon after daylight. One could see that they came from a place where life was primitive, for even here, where the breadth of a street was at their disposal, they did not ride abreast but single file, as men do who are

accustomed to threading narrow trails. They were led by a patriarchal fellow with a snowy beard and a face of simple dignity. Behind him came a squat and twisted hunchback, who met every inquisitive gaze with a sharp challenge that discouraged staring. These two were followed by more than a dozen others, and though their faces were all quiet and their bearing courteous, rifles lay balanced across their saddle-bows.

Most interesting of all, there rode with them a young woman whose bronzed hair caught a glint in the morning sun, and whose dark eyes were deep and soft like forest pools.

"The Kaintuckians!" murmured on-lookers along the broken sidewalks, as the cavalcade dismounted in the court-house square, and eyes narrowed in a sinister augury of hostile welcome.

Filing quietly through the doors of the court-house, the visitors seated themselves together in a body on one side of the central aisle. When the old bell had noisily clanged its summons, and Sheriff Beaver sang out his "Oyez, oyez!" the judge looked down upon them with more than passing interest.

From the door at one side of the bench Kenneth Thornton was brought in. As a gratuitous mark of indignity, he came with his wrists manacled; but from the Kentucky group—even from Dorothy—that circumstance wrung not even a murmur of resentment.

The accused stood for a moment, before he took his seat, with eyes ranging over the place until they came to the section of the dingy room where he encountered the unsavouring faces of friends. There were his supporters, who had come so far to raise their voices in his behalf, and perhaps to share the brunt of hatred that had been fired against him, and there—he felt a surge of emotion under which his face burned—was Dorothy herself!

They had not brought her to the jail, and on the advice of Jim Rowlett she had not signalized her coming by insisting on seeing her husband; so their eyes met without prior warning to the man.

It was to Kenneth Thornton as if there were sunlight in one corner of that dingy room, with its unwashed windows and its stale smells, while elsewhere hung the murk of little hope. A few stanch friends, at least, he had, but they were friends among

enemies, and he steeled himself for facing the stronger forces.

Behind the rostrum, where the judge sat shabbily enthroned, a line of dusty and cobwebbed volumes tilted tipsily, in ironical reminder of the fact that this dispenser of justice took his cue less from their ancient principles than from whispers alien to their spirit.

A shuffling of muddy feet ensued; then a lesser sound that came with the giving out of many breaths—a sound that has no name, but which has been known since days when men and women settled back in the great Roman amphitheater and waited for the lions to be turned into the arena where the victims waited.

From the bench was drawled the routine query:

"Has the commonwealth any motions?"

The commonwealth's attorney rose to his feet and straightened the papers upon his desk.

"May it please your honor," he said slowly, "in the case of the commonwealth against Kenneth Thornton, now pending on this docket, I wish to enter a motion of dismissal, and to ask that your honor exonerate the bond of the defendant."

The man in the prisoner's dock had come braced for a shock, but now he bent forward in an amazement that he could not conceal. From the back of the court-room to the front there ran an inarticulate sound from human throats that needed no words to voice its expression of incredulity and disappointment.

There was a rapping of the gavel, and the State's representative went evenly on:

"The trial of this defendant would only entail a needless cost upon the State. I hold here, duly attested, the confession of Sally Turk, sister of the accused and widow of the deceased, that it was she and not Kenneth Thornton who shot John Turk to death. I have sworn out a warrant for this woman's arrest, and I will now ask the sheriff to execute it forthwith and take her into custody."

Kenneth Thornton was on his feet with a short protest shaping itself on his lips, but his eyes met those of his sister, who rose from her place against the wall as her name was spoken. He read in them a determination that gave him pause, and an unspoken plea for silence.

Answering to the restraining hand of his own lawyer on his elbow, he sank back into

his seat with a swimming head and heard the calm, almost purring voice from the bench directing:

"Mr. Clerk, let the order be entered."

After that astonishment grew to complete dumfounding as he saw, standing in the aisle, Will Turk, the backbone and inspiration of the entire prosecution, and heard his voice addressing the judge.

"May it please your honor, I'd love ter be tuck on Sally Turk's bond, when the time comes. I've done satisfied myself thet she kilt my brother in self-defense."

XXIX

OUTSIDE, on the straggling streets, clumps of perplexed men gathered to discuss the seven days' wonder which had been enacted before their eyes. Slowly they watched the Kentuckians troop out of the court-house, with the late prisoner in their midst, and marveled to see Will Turk join them with friendly hand-shakings. Some of these onlookers remembered the dark and glowering face with which Turk had said yesterday of the man upon whom he was now smiling:

"Penitentiary, hell! Hit's got ter be the gallows!"

It was understood, from scraps of overheard conversation, that the horsemen from the West meant to ride homeward again at once, but that Thornton himself would stay a while and visit his sister in the jail.

But by putting two and two together the more ingenious analysts fell upon an artificial solution, which gained instant currency. Men flicked their eyelids in knowing winks and nodded their heads in sage understanding. After all, they agreed it was one of those very simple and adroit strategies with which a master tactician can alter his whole line of attack on the eve of a battle.

Will Turk had come to court, they said, prepared to convict and hang his enemy. He had seen that little army of rifle-bearing Kentuckians, and had realized that others were probably following behind them. Swiftly and sagaciously he had rearranged his forces, in preference to inviting a pitched battle.

The woman had been induced to make her confession under secret promise of leniency, and Thornton himself had been beguiled with a show of forgiveness and friendship. Now his reassured body-guard

would go away and leave him—to a shot from the laurel, which would accomplish the purpose that had been foregone in court, and John Turk would be no less avenged.

Thus minds accustomed to circuitous reasoning refused to strike from point to point in the direct line of fact, and supplied for themselves an explanation suited to their predilections. This public misconception was not dissipated even when Kenneth Thornton and his wife rode home with Will Turk and slept as guests under his roof.

"Ye needn't hev no fear erbout goin' on home, Ken, an' leavin' Sally hyar," said Turk, when he and Thornton sat over their pipes that night. "I gives ye my hand thet she's goin' ter go free on bond, an' when her case is tried she'll come cl'ar."

Kenneth Thornton knew that he was listening to the truth. As his fingers, groping in his pocket for a match, touched the little walnut-shell basket, he drew it out and looked at it. Then, turning to Dorothy, who sat on the other side of the hearth, he said seriously:

"The luck-piece held hits charm, honey!"

But an hour later, when Kenneth had gone out to see to his horse in the barn, and when Lindy was busied about some kitchen task, Will Turk rose from his seat, and, standing before Dorothy, began to speak in a low-pitched and sober voice.

"Ye seems ter me like a woman a man kin talk sense ter," he said; "an' I'm goin' ter tell ye somethin' either you or yore man ought ter know. Ken hain't out o' danger yit. He's got an enemy over thar in Kaintuck, an' when he starts back thet enemy's right like ter be watchin' the trail thet leads home!"

Dorothy held his eyes steadily. Then she questioned him with a name:

"Bas Rowlett?"

Will Turk shook his head as he responded deliberately:

"Whatever I knows comes ter me in secrecy; but hit was at a time when I miscomprehended things, an' I sees 'em different now. I didn't say hit was Bas Rowlett, ner I didn't say hit wasn't nuther; but this much I kin say—whoever this feller is thet aims ter layway Ken, he aims ter do hit in Virginny. Seems like he dasn't undertake hit in Kaintuck."

Dorothy drew a breath of relief for even that assurance. For the duration of a short

silence Turk again paced his floor, with his head bent and his hands at his back; then he halted.

"You go on home ter-morrer an' leave Ken hyar," he enjoined. "He wants ter see his sister free on bail afore he leaves, anyhow. When he gits ready ter start back, I'll guide him by a way I knows, which a woman couldn't handily travel, an' I'll pledge ye he'll crost over ter Kaintuck es safe es he come."

On an afternoon near sunset, when low-

felt assured, before dark, and would ride it alone; and here, far from his own neighborhood, Bas would be suspected of no murderous activity.

But as he lay there, for once prepared to act as executioner in person, instead of through a hireling, Kenneth Thornton and Will Turk were nearing the State border, traveling fur-



THE COUNTY-SEAT SIMMERED WITH AN AIR OF EXCITEMENT ON THE MORNING OF THE TRIAL

hanging clouds were sifting down a thick veil of snow, and when the bare woods stood ghostly and white, Bas Rowlett lay, numb with cold but warm with anticipation, by the trail that led from the county-seat in Virginia to the gap that gave a gateway into Kentucky.

He lay under a tangle of briars, strategically masking an ambushade from which his rifle could rake the road and his eyes could command it for a hundred yards or more. He had lain there all day. Kenneth Thornton would ride that trail, he

tively and unseen by a "trace" that had put the bulk of a mountain between them and Rowlett's ambushade.

Sim Squires was finding himself in a most intricate and perplexing maze of circumstances—the situation of the man who wears another man's collar, and whose vasalage galls almost beyond endurance.

It was dawning on Squires that he was involved in a web of such tangled meshes that before long he might find no way out. He had been induced to waylay Kenneth

Thornton at the demand of one whom he dared not incense, on pain of an exposure that would send him to the penitentiary. His intended victim not only had failed

household from which he drew his legitimate wage.

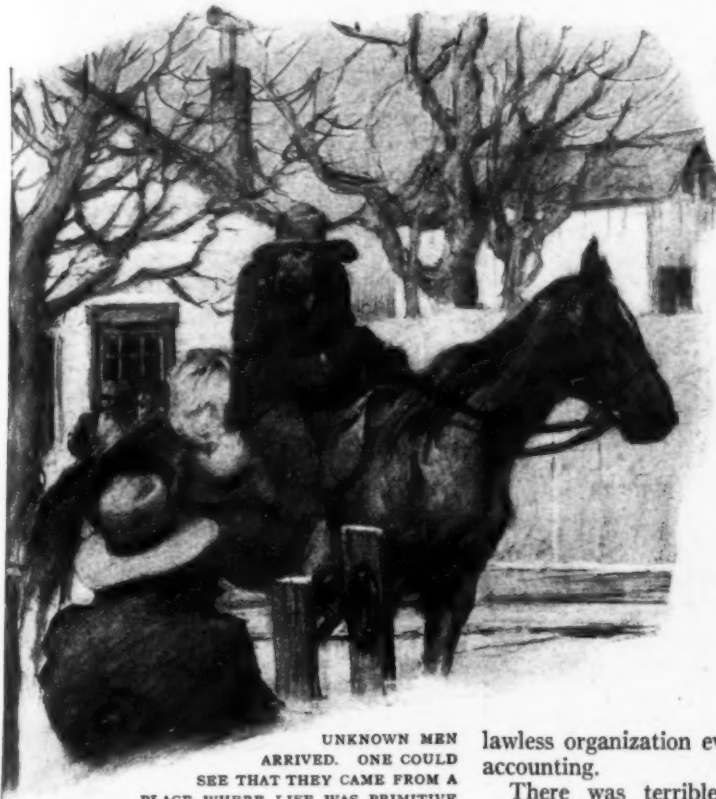
But complications stood irrevocably between Sim and his inclinations. His feeling against Bas Rowlett was becoming an obsession of venom, fed by the overweening arrogance of the man; but Bas still held him in the hollow of his hand, and besides these reefs of menace there were yet other perilous shoals to be navigated.

He had been compelled by Rowlett not only to join the "riders," who were growing in numbers and covert power, but to take such an active part in their proceedings as would surely draw down upon his head heavy bolts of wrath should the

lawless organization ever be brought to an accounting.

There was terrible danger there, and Sim knew it. He knew that when Bas Rowlett had quietly stirred into life the forces from which the secret body was born, he had been building for one purpose, and one purpose only. To their own membership, the riders might be a body of vigilantes with divers intentions, but to Bas they were never anything but a mob which should some day lynch Kenneth Thornton, and then be destroyed themselves, like the bee that dies when it stings. Through Squires as the unwilling instrument, Rowlett was possessing himself of such evidence as would undo the leaders when the organization had served that one purpose.

Yet Sim dared reveal none of these secrets. The active personality who was the head and front of the riders was Sam Opdyke's friend, Rick Joyce; and Rick Joyce was the man to whom Bas could whisper the facts that gave him power over Sim.



UNKNOWN MEN
ARRIVED. ONE COULD
SEE THAT THEY CAME FROM A
PLACE WHERE LIFE WAS PRIMITIVE

to die, but had grown to an influence in the neighborhood that made him a most dangerous enemy. It would go hard with Sim if Thornton learned the truth as to who had fired that shot.

Squires had gone as Rowlett's spy into the Thornton household, hating Kenneth with a sincerity bred of fear; but now he had grown to hate Rowlett the more bitterly of the two. Indeed, save for that sword of Damocles which hung over him in the memory of his murderous employment, and for its possible consequences, he would have liked his employer; and Dorothy's kindness had awakened in the jackal's heart a bewildering sense of gratitude, such as he had never known before.

So, while compulsion still bound him to Bas Rowlett, his own sympathies were beginning to lean toward the fortunes of the

For Sim had shot to death Rick's nephew. Though he had done it while drunk and only half responsible, and had been incited to the deed by Bas, no man save the two of them knew that, and so far the murderer had never been discovered.

It seemed to Sim that any way he turned his face he encountered a cul-de-sac of mortal danger. His helplessness left him in a perplexity that fretted him and edged his nerves to rawness.

The winter had settled at last, with a beleaguering of steep and broken levels under a blockade of stark hardship. Peaks stood naked save for their evergreens, alternately wrapped in snow and viscid with mud. Morning disclosed the highways "all spewed up with frost," and noon found them impassably mired. Night brought from the forests the sharp frost-cracking of the beeches, like the pop of small guns. In wayside stores the backwoods merchants leaned over their counters and shook dismal heads when housewives plodded in over long and toilsome trails to buy salt and lard—and went home again with their sacks empty.

Those who did not "have things hung up" felt the pinch of actual suffering. In ill-lighted and still worse ventilated cabins faces became morose and pessimistic. Such human soil was fallow for the agitator, and the doctrine which the winter did not halt from traveling was the incitement preached by the riders.

Every wolf-pack that runs on its food-trail is made up of strong-fanged and tireless-thewed beasts, but at its head runs a leader neither elected nor born to his place. He has taken it and holds it against encroachment by title of a strength and boldness above that of any other. He loses it if a superior arises.

Like the wolves, the men who are of the vendetta acknowledge only the chieftainship which has arisen and stands by the same gage and proving. Kenneth Thornton, the recent stranger, had come to such a position. He had not sought it, but neither, when he realized the conditions, had he evaded it. He had made a name of marvelous prowess, which local minstrels wove into their "ballets." He was accounted to be possessed of an almost supernatural courage and invulnerability; of a physical strength and quickness that partook of magic. Men pointed to his

record as to that of a sort of superman, and they embellished fact with fable.

He had been the unchallenged leader of the Harpers since that interview with old Aaron Capper, and the ally of Jim Rowlett since his bold ride to Hump's cabin; but now it was plain that this leadership was merging rapidly into one embracing both clans. Old Jim had not long to live, and since peace had been reestablished, the Doanes no less than the Harpers began to look to, and to claim as their own, this young man whose personal appeal had laid hold upon their imaginations.

This was one side of the situation that the winter saw solidifying into permanence. There was another.

Every jealousy stirred by this new régime, every element that found itself galled by the rearrangement, was driven to that other influence which had sprung up in the community—and it was an influence which was growing like a young Goliath. So far its growth was hidden and furtive, but for that reason only the more dangerous. The riders had failed to free Sam Opdyke, and Sam was in prison; but the riders were not through. It pleased them to remain deceptively quiet just now, but their meetings, held in secret places, brought a multiplied response to the roll-call. Plans were building toward the bursting of a storm which should wreck the new dikes and dams.

The leaders preached unendingly, under the vicarious urging of Bas Rowlett, that the death of Kenneth Thornton was the aim and end beyond other aims and ends. The riders were not striking sporadic blows now, as they had done at first, in petty "regulatings." They were looking to a time when there was to be one ride such as the mountains had never seen—a ride at whose end a leader living by the river bend, a judge and a commonwealth's attorney living in town, and the foreman of a certain jury, should have paid condignly for their offenses.

Christmas came to the house in the bend of the river with a crystal sheeting of ice.

Most of the native-born in the land of "Do Without" have never heard of Christmas-trees or the giving of gifts; but all of them know the old legend which says that at the hour when the Savior was born in a manger, the bare and frozen elder-bushes come to momentary bloom again in the thickets, and the "critters and

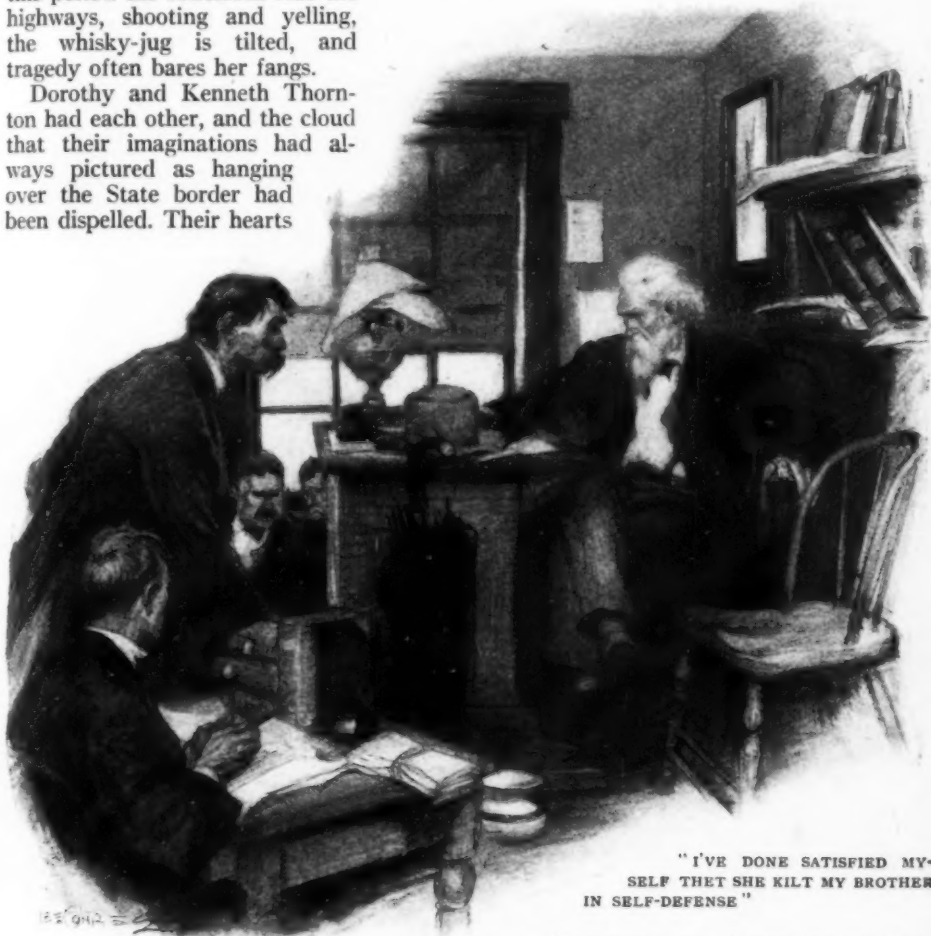
beasties" kneel down in their stalls, answering to some dumb and mysterious mandate of reverence.

This, no doubt, is a myth; but the fact is more substantially recognized that at this period the roisterous ride the highways, shooting and yelling, the whisky-jug is tilted, and tragedy often bares her fangs.

Dorothy and Kenneth Thornton had each other, and the cloud that their imaginations had always pictured as hanging over the State border had been dispelled. Their hearts

her, because, before she had seen it, she had read of just such a smile in a journal written almost a century and a half ago.

"Hit's plumb beautiful out thar," she murmured.



"I'VE DONE SATISFIED MYSELF THET SHE KILT MY BROTHER IN SELF-DEFENSE"

were high, too, with the thought that when spring came again with its whispers from the south, there would be the blossoming of a new life in that house, as well as along the slopes of the inanimate hills.

But now on Christmas morning, as Dorothy looked out of a window, whose panes were laced with most delicate traceries of frost, there was a thorn-prickle of fear in her heart.

Kenneth came in and stood looking outward over her shoulder. His smile flashed as it had done that first day when it startled

The man's arm slipped around her.

It might almost have been the Kenneth Thornton who had seen court life in England who gallantly responded:

"Hit's more beautiful in hyar!"

There had been an ice storm the night before, following on a day of snowfall, and the mountain world stood dazzling in its whiteness, with every twig and branch glazed and resplendent under the sun. On the ice-bound slopes slept shadows of ultramarine. Near the window the walnut-tree stood, no more a high priest garbed in a green mantle or a wind-tossed cloak of orange-brown, but a warrior starkly

stripped of his draperies and incased in a shining mail of ice.

It stood with its bold head lifted toward the sky, but bearing the weight of winter; and when the bitter weather passed, it would not be found unscarred. Already

to shut out a horror, and a shudder ran through her body.

"What is it, honey?" demanded the man anxiously, as he felt her tremor against his arm. "Air ye cold?"

Dorothy opened her eyes and laughed,



ROWLETT LAY
UNDER A TAN-
GLE OF BRIERS,
FROM WHICH HIS
RIFLE COULD RAKE
THE ROAD

and woman looked out, they could hear from time to time the crash of weaker brethren out there in the forests—victims and sacrifices to the crushing of a beauty that was also fatal.

Until spring answered her question, Dorothy reflected, she could only guess how deep the blight, which she had discovered in the fall, had struck at the robustness of the old tree's life. For all its stalwartness, its life had already been long, and if it should die—she closed her eyes as if

one great branch drooped under its icy freighting. As the man

but with a tremulousness in her mirth.

"I reckon I hain't rekivered from the fright hit give me when ye went over thar ter yore sister's in Virginny," she answered. "Sometimes I feels plumb timorous."

"But the peril's done past now," he reassured her; "an' all the enemies we had, thet's wuth winnin' over, hev done come ter be friends."

"All thet's wuth winnin' over, yes," she admitted without conviction; "but hit's the other kind thet a body hes most cause ter fear!"

Into the man's thought flashed the picture of Bas Rowlett, and a grim stiffness came to his lips; but she could hardly know of that remaining danger, he reflected.

"What enemies does ye mean, honey?" he asked seriously.

She, too, had been thinking of Bas, and she believed that fear to be her own exclusive secret; so she answered in a low voice.

"I was thinkin' of the riders. I reckon they know that you an' Hump hev been seekin' evidence erginst 'em."

The man laughed.

"Don't disquiet yoreself erbout them fellers, honey. We hev been seekin' evidence—an' gittin' hit, too. Ef the riders air strong enough ter best us, we hain't fit ter succeed!"

Part of that Christmas Day was spent by Sim Squires in the cabin where he had been accustomed to holding his secret councils with his master, Bas Rowlett. Sim was acknowledging in his own mind something like a state of panic. His resentment against the man who had used him as a shameless pawn, yet whose power he could not break, was mounting to the force of a fixed idea, which was eclipsing his hatred for Kenneth Thornton, the intended victim whom he was paid to shadow and spy upon. For Dorothy he had come to acknowledge a dumb worship—not the adoration of a lover, but that dog-like affection which reacts to kindness where there has been no other kindness in life.

It was not in keeping with such a character that he should attempt any candid repudiation of his long-worn yoke or declare any spirit of conversion. He merely assumed a deeper loyalty to Bas Rowlett and a more personal interest in his spy's work. He professed a growing fear and hatred for Thornton; and, despite Rowlett's native caution, he was in a measure beguiled by these deceptions.

XXX

"I'm growin' right restive, Bas," whined Sim on this Christmas Day, as the two shivered and drank whisky to keep themselves warm in the abandoned shack, where they were never so incautious as to light a fire. "Any time this feller Thornton finds out I shot him, he'll turn on me an' kill me. Thar hain't but one safe way out. Let me finish up the job an' rest easy!"

Bas Rowlett shook his head decisively.

"When I gits ready ter hev ye do thet," he ruled imperiously, "I'll let ye know, Sim. Right now hit's the last thing I'd countenance."

"I kain't no fashion make ye out," complained Sim. "Ye hired me ter do the job an' blackguarded me fer failin'. Now ye acks like ye war paid ter perfect the feller from peril."

Rowlett scowled. It was not his policy to confide in his myrmidons; yet with an adherent who knew as much as Squires, it was well to take a confidential pose.

"Things hev changed, Sim," he explained. "Any heedless killin's right now would bring on a heap of trouble afore I'm ready fer hit. Ye hain't no more fretful ter hev him die than what I be; an' thet's what we're buildin' up this hyar night-rider outfit ter do."

"Thet's another thing thet disquiets me, though," objected Squires. "I'm es deep inter thet es anybody else, an' them fellers, Thornton an' old Hump, hain't niver goin' ter rest twell they penitentiaries some of the head men!"

Bas Rowlett laughed. Then, with such a confidential manner as he rarely bestowed upon a subordinate, he laid a hand on his hireling's arm.

"Thet's all right, Sim. The penitentiary's a right fit an' becomin' place fer them men, when ye comes ter study hit out. We hain't objectin' ter thet ourselves—in due time."

Sim Squires drew back, and his face became for the moment terror-stricken.

"What does ye mean?" he demanded tensely. "Does ye aim ter let me sulter out my days in convict stripes, because I've done sarved yore ends?"

Bas Rowlett shook his head.

"Not you, Sim," he gave assurance. "I'm goin' ter tek keer of *you* all right; but when the rest of 'em hev done what we wants, we hain't got no further use fer them riders. Atter thet they'll jest be a pest an' burden ter us ef they goes on ter-rifyin' everybody."

"I don't no fashion comprehend ye; but I've got ter know whar I stands at."

There was an evident stiffening of Sim's moral backbone, and his employer hastened to smooth away his anxiety.

"I hain't niver drapped no hint of this ter no man afore," he confided; "but me an' you air actin' tergither es pardners, an' ye've got a license ter know. These hyar riders air ergoin' ter handle the men thet stands in my light, and then I'm goin' ter everlastin'ly bust up the riders. I wouldn't love ter see 'em git too strong. Ye fights a forest fire by buildin' back-fires, Sim; but ef ye lets the back-fires burn too long, ye're es bad off es ye war when ye started out."

"How does ye aim ter take keer of me?" inquired the listener.

"I reckon we'd better not start away ter-gither," suggested Sim, when they had brought their business to an end. "You go on, Bas, an' I'll foller d'reckly."

When he stood alone in the house, Sim spent a half-hour seeking to study the ramifications of the whole web of intrigue from various angles of consideration. Before he left the place, he acted on a sudden thought. Groping in the recess between rafter and overhang, he drew out the dust-coated diary that Bas had thrust there and forgotten, long ago. This



"DON'T DISQUIET YORE-
SELF ERBOUT THE
RIDERS, HONEY"

"When the time comes ter bust 'em up," Bas replied promptly, "we'll hev strength enough ter handle the matter. Leave thet ter me. You'll be State's evidence then, an' we'll prove thet ye j'ined up ter keep watch fer me."

Over Sim Squires's face spread the vapid grin that he used to conceal his emotions.

"But thet all comes later on," enjoined Bas. "Meanwhile keep preachin' ter them fellers thet Thornton's buildin' up a case erginst 'em. Keep 'em wrought up."

Sim put into his pocket and took with him when he left the house.

When the slow and tedious months of winter had worn through to late January, Dorothy went to Virginia to visit Sally Turk, who, because she still rested under the technical custody of the law, could not come to Kentucky. She went alone, since Kenneth Thornton and Hump Doane were not yet ready to strike their intended blow at the growing strength of the lawless rid-

ers, but were busily engaged in their task of investigation.

Dorothy did not stay long. Her heart was too heavy with the fear of Bas Rowlett, and her thoughts were turning homeward with maternal hopes for the future. At such a time she wished to be where she could see the first signs of spring life that came to being in the black walnut-tree.

On her return journey, when she neared a point where her way lay over the backbone of the ridges, she saw a solitary horseman etched against the sky, and she knew, even before the silhouette became recognizable, that Kenneth had come to meet her. Her pulses quickened, for in these days of looking forward a new and greater tenderness had come to her love for her man.

That was the exact spot, too, where she wanted to be met. Up to that point she had been climbing, and the high cornice of the ranges had stood like a wall between herself and home; but from that lofty lookout the first glimpse of her own country broke on the eye with a vista over a ten-mile radius of sight. Soon there would be the flash of a river bend, and the glimpse of a small patch of clearing, with a gray roof showing like a child's toy in the distance. Before that roof and its blue chimney-thread of smoke there would be a gray smudge of brown, recognizable and dear to her—the tree that stood warder over the dead, the living, and the life that was to be.

Bas Rowlett had kept well the secret of his chagrin and bitter disappointment growing out of Kenneth Thornton's safe return from Virginia by another path than the one upon which he had himself lain in unsuccessful ambuscade. His incredible self-complacency still clung to the delusion that, with Thornton removed from his path, his passion for the widow would not be hopeless.

His underground sources of information kept him informed when Kenneth was away from home. Bas contrived to be passing often at such times, and to stop, despite the scorn which was his only welcome. It pleased him just now to present a humble and contrite face, though it brought no sign of relenting in the dark eyes that held only disdain.

His visits had to wear a casual semblance. It annoyed him greatly that Sim Squires, the hired man whom he had introduced into that house, had developed a trick

of turning up and standing around whenever he presented himself at the place.

His egotism told him that a half-hour alone with the young wife might go far toward healing the breach. One afternoon, when he dismounted, it seemed that he was to have his wish. Dorothy did not invite him to enter or be seated, but his hope persisted, and at last he said bluntly:

"Dorothy, I've done been lookin' backward, an' hit seems ter me like I've done been a crazed man, thet's finely come back ter his rightful senses ergin. I wonder kin I ever convince ye of thet, albeit hit's gospel true."

"No, ye kain't nuver," she answered shortly. "I knows more things erbout ye than even ye suspicions."

Bas bent forward, his interest and anxiety arrested; and then casually about the corner of the house strolled Sim. It did not seem that the man had any purpose, yet he lingered; and finally, when Bas turned on his heel and went to the stile, Sim went with him.

"Why in hell does ye always come hangin' round like some bothersome feist, every time I lights down at this hyar house?" demanded the master, in a flare of uncontrolled fury.

His hireling looked back blankly, with an injured expression.

"Me, Bas?" he questioned innocently. "Why, I jest 'lowed me an' you was right good friends. Hit kindly pleasures me ter pass a word of talk with ye now an' then. Ye always pays me well, an' thar mout be some question ye wanted ter ask me. Thet's all, Bas."

"Hell!" exclaimed the other, as he unhitched his horse.

The winter broke that year like a glacier suddenly loosened from its moorings of ice. A warm breath came out of the south, and icicled gorges sounded to the sodden drip of melting waters. Snow-slides moved on hundreds of steeply pitched slopes, and fed sudden rivulets into freshet roarings. The river itself was no longer a clear ribbon, but a turgid flood-tide that swept along uprooted trees and snags of foam-lathered drift.

There was as yet neither bud nor leaf, and the air was raw and bone-chilling; but everywhere was the restless stirring of dormant life-impulses and uneasy hints of labor-pains.

While the river sucked at its mud banks

and lapped its inundated lowlands, the walnut-tree in the yard above high-water mark sang sagas of rebirth through the night, as the wind gave tongue in its naked branches.

In the breast of Sim Squires this spirit of restlessness was more than an uneasy stirring. It was an obsession. He knew that when spring, or at the latest early summer, brought firmness to the mired highways and deeper cover to the woods, the organization of which he was a prominent member would strike, and would stake its success or failure upon a decisive issue. Then Kenneth Thornton and a handful of lesser designates would die—or else the riders would encounter defeat and see their leaders go to the penitentiary.

Bas Rowlett, himself a traitor to the Ku-klux, had promised Sim safety; but Sim had never known Bas to keep faith, and he did not trust him now. Yet, should he break with the evil forces to which he stood allied, Sim's peril became only the greater. So he lay awake through these gusty nights cudgeling his brain for a solution. At the end, when spring had come with her first gracious touches of early blossoming, he made up his mind.

Having come to his decision one balmy afternoon, Sim went, with a caution that could not have been greater had he contemplated murder, to the house of Hump Doane, at a time when he knew the old man to be alone. His design, after all, was a simple one for a man versed in the art of double-crossing and triple-crossing. If the riders prevailed, he was safe enough, by reason of his charter membership; and none of his brother vigilantes knew that his participation had been unwilling. But they might not prevail, and, in any event, it was well to have a friend among the victors.

He meant, therefore, to tell Hump Doane some things that Doane wished very much to know; but he would go to the confessional under such an oath of secrecy as could not recoil upon him. Then whoever triumphed, be it Bas, the whitecaps, or the forces of law and order, Sim would have a protector on the winning side.

The hunchback met his furtive visitor at the stile and walked with him back into the chill woods, where they were safe from observation. Sim's drawn face and frightened eyes told him in advance that this would be no ordinary interview; yet he was unprepared for what he heard.

When Squires had hinted that he came heavy with tidings of gravest import, but must have guarantees of protection before he spoke, Hump Doane sat reflecting dubiously upon the matter. Then he shook his head.

"I don't jest see whar hit profits me ter know things thet I kain't make no use of," he demurred.

Sim Squires bent forward with haunted eyes.

"They're facts," he protested. "Ye kin use them facts, only ye mustn't tell no man whar ye got 'em from."

"Go ahead, then," decided Doane, after weighing the proposition further. "I'm harkenin', an' I stands pledged ter hold my counsel es ter yore part in tellin' me."

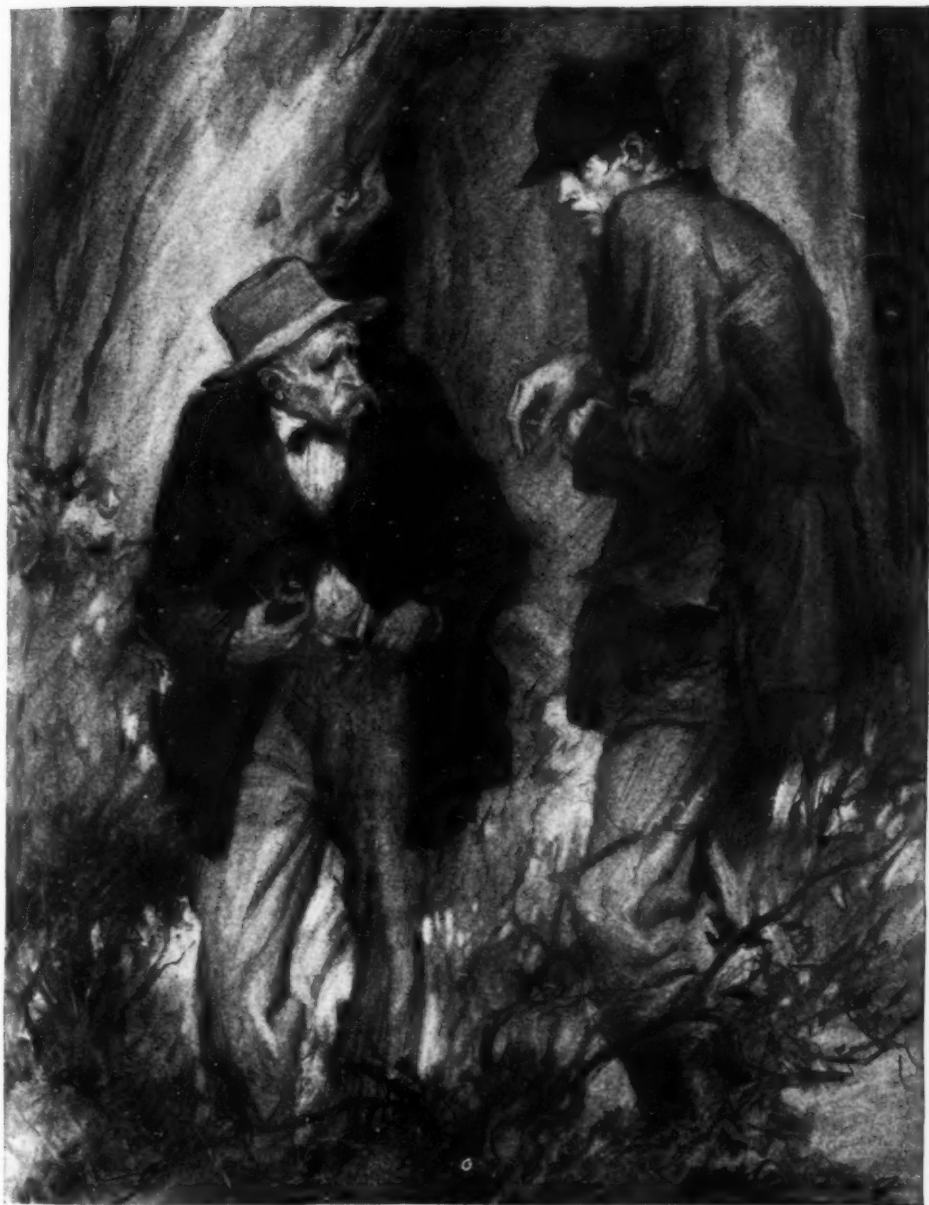
The sun was sinking toward the horizon, and the woods were cold. The informer rose and walked back and forth on the soggy carpet of rotted leaves, with hands that clasped and unclasped themselves at his back. He was under a stress of feeling that bordered on collapse.

The dog that has been kicked and knocked about from puppyhood has in it the accumulated viciousness of its long injuries. Such a beast is ready to run amuck, frothing at the mouth; and Sim Squires was not unlike that dog.

He had debated this step through days and nights of hate and terror. He had faltered and vacillated. Now he had decided, and the long-repressed passions had broken all his dams of reserve, transforming him as if with an epilepsy. His eyes were bloodshot, his cheeks were putty-yellow, and, had he been a dog instead of a man, his fangs would have been slathering with foam.

Heretofore he had spoken hesitantly and cautiously. Now, like the epileptic or the mad dog, he burst into a volcanic outpouring in which wild words tumbled upon themselves in a cataract of boiling abandon. His fists were clenched, and veins stood out on his face.

"I'm the man thet shot Kenneth Thornton when he fust come hyar," was his sensational beginning; "but albeit my hand sighted the gun an' pulled the trigger, hit was another man's damn dirty heart thet contrived the act, an' another man's dollars thet paid fer hit. I was plumb fo'ced ter do hit by a low-lived feller thet hed done got me whar he wanted me—a feller thet bulldozed an' dogged me, an' didn't



"HUMP, T'OTHER ONE WAR—YORE OWN BOY, PETE"

suffer me ter call my soul my own—a feller thet I hates an' dreads like I don't nuver expect ter hate Satan in hell!"

The informer broke off and stood a pitiable picture of rage and cowardice, shaken with tearless sobs of unwonted emotion.

"Some men ruins women," he rushed on, "an' some ruins other men. He done

thet ter me. Whenever I boggled or balked, he cracked his whip anew, an' I wasn't nuthin' but his pore white nigger thet obeyed him. I ached ter kill him, an' I didn't even dast ter contrary him. His name's Bas Rowlett!"

The recital broke off, and the speaker stood trembling from head to foot. The

hearer paled to the roots of his shaggy hair, and his gargoyle face became a mask of tragic fury.

At first Hump Doane did not trust himself to speak. When he did, there was a moment in which the other feared him almost more than he feared Bas Rowlett. For the words of the hunchback came like a roar of thunder, and he seemed on the verge of leaping at his visitor's throat.

"Afore God, ye damn self-confessed, murderin' liar," he bellowed, "don't seek ter accuse Bas Rowlett ter me in no sich perjury! He's my kinsman an' my friend, an' I knows ye lies. Ef ye ever lets words like them cross yore lips ergin in my hearin', I'll t'ar the tongue out o' yore mouth with these two hands of mine!"

For a space they stood there in silence, the old man glaring, the younger slowly coming back from his mania of emotion, as from a trance.

Perhaps, had Sim sought to insist on his story, he would never have been allowed to finish it; but in that little interval of pause Hump Doane's passion too passed, as passions too violent to endure must pass.

After the first unexpected shock, it was borne in on him that there are confessions which cannot be doubted, and that of them this was one. His mind began to settle itself, and after a little he said, in a voice of deadly coldness:

"Howsoever, now that ye've started, go on. I'll hear ye out."

"I'm tellin' ye gospel truth, an' sometimes the truth hurts," insisted Sim. "Bas war jealous of Dorothy Harper, an' I didn't dast ter deny him. He paid me a patch of river-bottom land fer the job, albeit I failed."

Hump Doane stood, his ugly face seamed with a scowl of incredulous sternness, his hands twitching at the ends of his long and gorilla-like arms.

"Go on!" he reiterated. "Don't keep me waitin'!"

Standing rigid with emotion, Sim Squires doggedly went on. He told, omitting nothing, the whole wretched story from his own knowledge—how Bas had sought to bring on the war afresh, in order that his enemy, Kenneth Thornton, might perish in its flaming; how, with the same end in view, Bas had shot at old Jim; how he himself had been sent to trail Thornton to Virginia, that his master might inform upon him; and how, while the Virginian was away, in jeopardy of his life, the arch conspirator had pursued his wife until she, being afraid to tell her husband, had come near killing him herself.

"Hit war Bas thet stirred up the riders into formin'," declared the spy in conclusion. "He didn't niver take no part hisself, but he used two men thet didn't dast disobey him—two men thet he rules over like nigger slaves. The riders hev got one objec' over an' above everything else, thet he aims ter hev 'em carry through. Thet is ter kill Ken Thornton!"

Hump Doane walked over and stood looking up from his squat, toad-like deformity into the face of the man who towered above him; but in his eyes was the blaze with which a giant might look down on a pygmy.

"Ye says he used two men, Sim." The falsetto of the hunchback's voice was as sharp as a dagger's point. "Ef ye came hyar fer any honest purpose, I calls on ye, now, ter give me them two names!"

Squire's face turned even paler than it had been. The veins along his temples were pulsing, and his words caught and hung in hesitancy; but he gulped and said in a forced voice:

"I was one of 'em, Hump."

"An' t'other one? Who war he?"

Again the informer hesitated, this time longer than before; but in the end he said dully:

"Hump, t'other one war—yore own boy, Pete."

(To be continued in the March number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE)

THE SEER

WHEN little minds foretell the end of things,
And stay the hopes that would make bright the earth,
He sees each far, unfolding year that brings
To dreams and faiths bemocked eternal worth.

Arthur Wallace Peach